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SOCIETY

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Carlos Fuentes: East or west, Sinatra is best

Sarah Benton: Secrets of the shadow cabinet

Jeremy Seabrook: A Bombay rent-boy's story

A fair cop?

Wapping, Guildford, West Midlands: is our police force rotten? A senior detective breaks silence to warn that more criticism could lead to anarchy in the streets

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22-23 MARCH 1990

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All Greek to us

Andrew Neil has supposedly rescued his reputation from Establishment ridicule. But his enemies will laugh last

Andrzej Krauze

The libel action conducted by Andrew Neil and Times Newspapers against Peregrine Worsthorne and the *Sunday Telegraph* has added immensely to the gaiety of public life, but has done less for the reputation of the plaintiffs, the defendant, or the majesty of the English law. The proceedings of the last ten days have been the legal equivalent of a nineteenth century duel—except that a duel had the advantage of one party ending up dead.

Lawyers, editors and a high court judge have struggled to define the difference between a bimbo and an ageing bimbette. The lawyers for Times Newspapers, who have also been in the European court arguing that the British libel laws are too restrictive, claimed that it was impossible to imagine a more damaging slur than Worsthorne's description of Neil as a "playboy". (How about: "Destroyed the reputation of a great Sunday newspaper"? Or: "Became a tout for televisual garbage"?)

We have tried to imagine Neil doing gorilla impersonations for Pamella Bordes, and of Worsthorne being seduced by George Melly as a schoolboy at Stowe. We have heard Worsthorne's lofty conviction that the attendance of members of the royal family at a club is no longer a guarantee of its respectability, and Neil's exposure of a "Garrick Club mafia who think they should be running everything".

But amidst the farce we were also witnessing, in almost cartoon form, a battle that has been going on in the Conservative party over the last 15 years. Each combatant represents what the other most despises. Peregrine Worsthorne is one of the last newspaper commentators to speak for a fundamentally English, traditional, high church, upper class form of Toryism. His instincts are authoritarian: in the Comment section of the *Sunday Telegraph* he has published articles on homosexuality, immigration, the English as a race, that few other editors would even consider, though they probably reflect racist, homophobic views that are quite widely held in the Tory shires.

Andrew Neil is the new Tory *par excellence*: Scottish, lower middle class, grammar school and Glasgow University. A red-blooded free marketeer, to the right of the Conservative Party on economic issues, to the left of it—probably to the left of the Labour party—on social issues (it is people like Neil who have made the left-right division almost meaningless in contemporary British politics).

The paradoxes are many. Andrew Neil's sexuality can probably best be described as robustly heterosexual but his sexual politics are of the basically libertarian kind that appal Grantham moralists. By contrast, it is a misconception to imagine that Worsthorne's public school homosexuality or his lasting fame for having said "fuck" on television are contradictions of his maverick Toryism, rather than embodiments of it.

Much of the court case concerned language. Terms like tradition, reverence and, above all, propriety, which are important to Worsthorne, are nothing but red rags to Neil. Worsthorne's England is one of elites, classes, cloisters, secrets, based on mysterious hierarchies and establishments. Andrew Neil, like his mentor and employer Rupert Murdoch, is fundamentally egalitarian and non-nationalistic (although the idea that he is anti-authoritarian would provoke hollow laughter in anyone who has worked in the *Sunday Times* newsroom). In his view Britain is a failing market, stifled by all the traditions that Perry holds so dear.

Also like Murdoch, he sees himself as a revolutionary, an enemy of the establishment in all its forms. From the outside, Andrew Neil may look like one of the most successful men of the 1980s but he clearly still considers himself to be an outsider, waging ceaseless war against the hydra-headed enemy: clubland, the Montrachet– drinking classes of north London, the church, the royal family, the doctors, the unions, and almost anyone else who gathers together in units of more than two people in Tramp.

It's difficult to see why Neil ever brought the case in the first place. He seemed unhappy in court, ill-at-ease among the banter which came so naturally to the Judge and to Worsthorne (who were, of course, both members of the Garrick). He has been forced to talk in public about the most painful episode of his career. Only at the parodic level of Court no. 13 has Neil rescued his reputation. The Establishment, as ever, will have the last laugh.

And if Neil still has a taste for libel litigation, we can think of countless ordinary people who have suffered far worse indignities at the hands of the press than he ever did, and could use some of the Murdoch millions. With proper financial backing they might even see their way to a real victory.

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Politics of squalor

On Monday, three different authorities identified the degradation of urban life in Britain. The churches published *Living Faith in the City*, Lord Justice Taylor published his report on football, and the Labour Party launched its London Pride campaign with a demand for a new London authority to tackle the capital's squalor. It's easy to find a common theme for these reports; the contempt for the powerless, or perhaps the fact that if you pen people in degrading surroundings they will behave with neither pride nor hope. But if such generalisations lead to a belief in a single, general solution then we have no solutions at all.

The Labour Party's seems, at first sight, the simplest and most effective. A new strategic authority for the capital would, at least, respond to the frustration of feeling that no-one takes responsibility for the squalor. (The government's greatest folly in abolishing the GLC was that now everyone blames it instead of Ken Livingstone.) But it is not clear from Labour's proposal what new powers, new income and new form of accountability could actually deal with the problems it identifies: litter, beggars, homelessness, crime, poverty. There is an unanswerable case for a London-wide authority for transport and a strong one for housing. At present, responsibility for housing the poor falls on boroughs with the lowest income, while the poor themselves may service the wealthy in Knightsbridge or the City. Similarly pollution by air or water respects no boundaries.

Yet litter and bad paving are best dealt with on the spot; community-based environmental teams, able to identify where new litter bins are needed, street lights are broken or who owns the foulest dogs, would be more effective than centralised but unco-ordinated teams. A useful task for a think-tank would be to take these three reports and identify what type of authority—central government, local government, football managers, private associations—can intervene most effectively. Simply asserting a common cause (an uncaring government) leaves people as powerless as ever.

So far, so little

Last week, the giant old WW2 battleships, USS Iowa and New Jersey, were mothballed. This week it was the turn of 35 overseas US military bases. But it would be wrong to see Defense Secretary Dick Cheney's proposed reductions in his country's military empire as the start of a new post-cold war era. The defence component of the US budget was long overdue for curtailment.

So far as Britain is concerned, the bases that are going represent only a small proportion of detritus from the *second*, Reagan-inspired, cold war. The assumptions of the first cold war are untouched. What Cheney has in mind for Greenham Common, Fairford and Wethersfield would leave them exactly as they were in 1978, when Greenham was a standby base, Fairford was in RAF hands, and Wethersfield was US-owned but left almost deserted.

Consider what Cheney has ignored: the expanded F-111 base at Upper Heyford (including new electronic war aircraft), more submarines on the Clyde, two maintenance bases, a network of a dozen wartime-use only hospitals, a European reserve war headquarters at High Wycombe, a new spy plane squadron at Alconbury, and a network of RAF/USAF "co-located" bases. All of these were developed since 1980. That's not all: only two weeks ago it was announced that the second cruise missile base at Molesworth was not going to be abandoned, but would be redeveloped as a US Joint (intelligence) Analysis Centre, to be relocated from Stuttgart. To say nothing of the plans to restore the "lost" ground-based cruise missiles with their air- and sea-launched equivalents. So far, so little.

The most important and hardest task in military intelligence is to estimate another party's politico-military intentions from knowledge of their capabilities. Cheney's announcement marks a trivial reduction in capabilities. But with the Panama incursion fresh in mind, there is no evidence of any change in intentions.

Ban the beef

Europe's gourmets dread 1992, when the English Channel will no longer be a barrier to British "ice cream", "sausages" and "beer". But there may be a new horror: they may be forced to accept British beef infected with BSE—the little-understood "mad cow disease".

From 1979, when the European Court of Justice stopped West Germany banning a French liqueur for not containing enough alcohol to meet German standards, it became clear which way the wind was blowing: a low standard generally accepted in one EC country would in the end have to be accepted by the rest. This has not stopped West Germans fighting to keep their 600-year-old "purity" standards for beer from attack by cheap British imports.

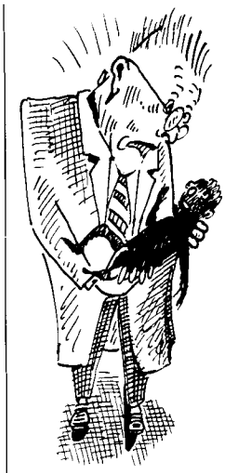
Since November they have also been trying to keep our beef out. After the outbreak of BSE in British herds, Australia, Finland, Israel, New Zealand, Sweden and the United States refused to import any live British cattle. The EC countries are about to tighten up their regulations over British imports, but West Germany is trying to ban beef products entirely. Under threat of being taken to the European Court the West Germans are reconsidering the situation. Once before the British government got heavy with another country—when the Dutch tried to insist that any calf exports came from guaranteed BSE-free herds. But the Dutch backed down: the British government announced that it was "grateful" to them for allowing "this valuable trade [to] continue as before". Meanwhile, no one knows whether BSE can pass from cows to humans. The German government, by refusing to take chances, seems to care more about the health of its people than does ours.

Hot air

A 40p increase in petrol prices is rumoured to be on the Prime Minister's To Do list. As an attempt to reduce car use and combat global warming, it's a welcome climbdown by a government whose fondness for roads and cars has never wavered. Last May, the Department of Transport was still lamenting how far behind the Americans, French and Germans in car ownership we were, and preaching that roads meant prosperity. Road use, it forecast hopefully, would increase by up to 142 per cent by 2025.

But 40 pence is not enough. Actually, no price increase is enough *on its own*. As a recent study by the Institute for Fiscal Studies shows, a *63p* rise in petrol would only cut petrol consumption by *less than 8 per cent*. A mere 40p will reduce this drop to around 5 per cent—a fall which, if the transport department's forecasts are correct, would immediately be wiped out by the inexorable increase.

Road transport accounts for just under a fifth of Britain's output of carbon dioxide. To achieve any significant reductions, the government must drop its pro-car bias. People won't stop using cars if there is no alternative.



Nice to see that ministers now agree with *NSS* on same-race adoption and fostering. Last summer, amid a media rumpus over the mixed-race baby in Croydon, we were almost alone in saying that black children "will, in general, be better prepared" for British society in black families. After a long enquiry, health minister Virginia Bottomley admitted this week that "in the great majority of cases, placement with a family of similar ethnic origin" would best meet a child's needs. David Mellor (now at the Home Office) should learn that basing a research policy on the *Daily Mail*'s front page is a costly waste of time

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LETTERS

Learning from Bhopal

Stuart Weir's editorial ("Toxic futures", 26 January) has given much needed space to the scandal of Bhopal, and the victims' struggle for justice. In the face of five years' manipulation by Union Carbide, and indifference from the Indian government of Rajiv Gandhi, victims have fought for the right not just for relief and rehabilitation, but to bring Union Carbide to justice—frequently in the light of intense harrasment. As recently as the fifth anniversary of the gas leak on 3 December last year, 800 were arrested during a peaceful demonstration. The new government has pledged support, but will face many of the same structural obstacles—economic and political—which the previous government was unwilling to question.

Last year a group of victims toured the USA, Ireland, Netherlands and England to make common cause with communities fighting toxic and hazardous production, and with other victims of the drive to create profit at the expense of health and safety. In spite of severe disabilities caused by the gas leak (particularly lung damage which gives constant breathlessness and frailty) the delegation took their message simply and with dignity to dozens of public meetings. They urged others to look to the structures in their own society creating other Bhopals, "mini-Bhopals", and "slow-Bhopals". They believe that what took place in Bhopal is happening universally.

What took place—and is still taking place—in Bhopal, does concern us all. It raises questions not only about *how* goods and services are produced, but also *why* they are produced. Union Carbide's Bhopal plant produced a pesticide whose withdrawal from the Indian market has gone unnoticed. Other pesticides are produced on the assumption that an agrochemical-based agriculture can produce more, more efficiently than other methods. In truth, it creates more profit, and greater control over agriculture to both states and corporations. Questions of control and production override questions of equity, distribution and land use.

Revelations about pollution, health hazards and environmental destruction caused by industry in eastern Europe forces an assessment of any simple cause and effect theories between the nature of capitalist development and industrial hazards. But this should not obscure our understanding of the fundamental questions. Where are the mechanisms for control over illegal actions and human rights violations by transnational corporations?

The power of transnational corporations is not a new preoccupation, but it must still be addressed. Transnationals' grip on the market is tight. With eastern Europe opening up, there are even more opportunities for control. There are neither legal structures nor enforceable international standards to compel transnational corporations to act responsibly, either in production, or in their actions following a disaster, or more importantly, to help decide whether and why they should be investing in the first place.

Bhopal supporters, inside and outside India, are organising a series of hearings at the end of 1990 to focus on these issues through the Permanent People's Tribunal on Industrial Hazards and Human Rights. Through presentation of evidence from both Bhopal, and comparable incidents, these will focus on the forces driving the industrial model of development, hazardous production, legal procedures and international controls over transnational corporations, in both industrialised and third world countries.

Barbara Dinham,
Bhopal Support/Transnational Information Centre
Elmfield Road
London SW12

Seizing power

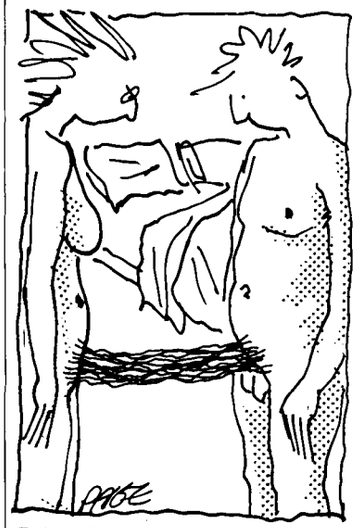
Ivor Powell's analysis of Mandela's role ("Nelson at large", 19 January) in removing the illegal white minority government of South Africa, appears to be a mixture of wishful thinking and total ignorance of black mentality.

Reference to the "myth" of a total transfer of power, infers that the black South African lacks the political fervour of the recent eastern block uprisings—no one is suggesting they will settle for anything less than removal of their oppressive governments, so why should Powell assume that Mandela would? Man of reason he may be, but no Uncle Tom. He has not spent a third of his life unjustly imprisoned in order to be grateful for a handful of de Klerk reforms!

Mandela and the ANC are not the "boys" of old colonial days but highly sophisticated politicians who intend to take power in their own country.

June M McKee
King Edward Road
Rugby
Warwickshire

Golden visions



Robert Walgate writes about Danah Zohar's book ("End games", 19 January) that "analogies remain analogies, not realities" and yet the reality of a universal "connectedness" can be, and often is, seen or felt by many people.

To give an example—a very poetic example—recently I have read of two separate experiences when people who have made love together and are in a heightened state of receptivity have seen in one case "a room full of golden coloured gossamer" that extended from themselves across to the bed of their child, and in another case "a tangle of golden cords" arching between the two lovers and rooted in their bodies.

All right, so it's not available on video yet—or is it?—but many would concur that there is more to life than your average sceptic will admit to.

Graham Carey
Granville Terrace
West Yorkshire

A troubled man

Thank you for *An Owl in a Sack Troubles No Man*—the booklet (which went out with your Christmas issue) featuring the best of the past ten years of *New Statesman*'s Weekend Competitions.

On page 50 there is a "meaningless proverb" which goes "the man on the Clapham omnibus will never get to Highgate", by someone calling himself Bob Scott, which is very probably his name. Well I have news for the editors because that is precisely where you *do* wind up if you get on the 137 which kicks off at Crystal Palace, passes through Clapham and goes on up via central London to Highgate.

So, there you are. I am The Man on the Clapham Omnibus and I have fallen asleep on it before now and that is where I have wound up, so can I have Bob Scott's 20p or whatever miserable pittance he got for his miserable entry? And why was the booklet so short? Arthur Marshall's ten years was good and fat. Is this the new economy or what?

I expect I will be blackballed for writing this letter, but so what. I have given the best years of my life to the comp and all for what? R J Pickles gets to win No. 3107!

I thought we had to be a teensy weensy bit subtle, narmean? But no. There is no fairness and now I am just chucked aside like a lot of old *NSS*s.

Jim Yorke
Lillieshall Road
London SW4

Editor's note: Arthur Marshall's ten years of competitions—*Never Rub Bottoms with a Porcupine (1968-1978)* cost £4.95—back in the days when £4.95 really *was* £4.95. Mr Yorke seems to have forgotten that *An Owl in a Sack* was free.

Putting democracy first

It is clear that a majority of British people want a change from Thatcher government and the divisions it is creating in our society. It is equally possible, as R W Johnson ("Third party insurance", 19 January) argues, that the present electoral system could frustrate their wishes.

Where this bold *woman* differs from Mr Johnson is when he argues that Neil Kinnock needs help from third *parties* to win the election. Of course, it would help if all opposition parties called a truce, stopped attacking each other in public, but separately voiced their different concerns. Candidates are already being chosen and local parties will not agree to stand them down or will be overridden if they do.

The Labour Party has to earn the

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votes of the *people* who previously voted for other parties. To do so it has to be seen to be putting democracy before its own party interest. It has to convince people that it no longer wants to operate a system which might allow Labour, with minority support, to impose absolute decision-making on minorities, or even majorities, in the population who disagree with them.

If Labour makes itself a vehicle for electoral reform, people voting in Conservative/Labour marginals will realise that it is the only major party with a chance of forming a government that is moving in that direction. Then, for one election only, present and previous supporters of third parties are likely to vote Labour to get rid of the present government and achieve electoral reform.

After that, together we can start to create not only a new electoral system but a different sort of politics and society where people feel they have a choice of which government rules them and, more importantly, an influence in its decisions.

Mary Georghiou
Millfield Road
York

Custard pie

On page 43 of the *NSS* of 5 January I find this: "The great victorian doctrinal systems are steadily undermined by impressionism and subjectivism; and just at the point where imperialism needs to assert the absolutism of its own values, a subversive cultural relativism takes grip on the collective sensibility."

If more than one in a thousand of your readers can grasp the meaning of that, then I'm a bucket of custard.

Paul Colbeck
Richmond Road
London E8

Jan Hus Foundation

Phillip Whitehead, in his article "In the Castle" (19 January), made some mistakes in his reference to the Jan Hus Educational Foundation, which, as secretary, I must correct.

The foundation was created ten years ago at the request of Czech philosophers who, unable to travel, wrote to ask their Oxford colleagues to lecture at independent philosophy seminars. The trustees of the foundation have raised money to provide visiting lecturers, books for the seminars, to run courses, to include support for independent art, music and literature. They have given assistance to the samizdat press by providing information, advice and eventually even equipment for its production, and provided stipends to support academic projects.

Although Mr Whitehead refers to it as "Roger Scruton's Hus Foundation", there are 18 trustees who reflect most shades of political opinion and also the scope of the work.

It is a delight to us that many of our colleagues have now been appointed to important positions in the Czechoslovak government but this has not brought our work to an end; our Czech and Slovak colleagues have formally appealed to us to expand and extend our original lecture and seminar programme.

We would love to do so if the money can be found; unfortunately, we are not, as Mr Whitehead describes us, "lavishly funded".

Barbara Day
Offord Road
London N1

THIS ENGLAND

£5 book tokens for entries printed. (Postcards

● Ian Ritchie explains: "We have to consider the feelings of the visitor who may not wish to see his current footwear in a museum. So we stay 35 years behind."—*Independent* (Mark Ambrose)

● I was intrigued by your article on the reason women have difficulty in reversing a car. Surely it is their shape which is the simple answer.

Having a bosom does not make it easy for a woman to turn round or to look over her shoulder, and so her reversing suffers. Of course, some women do master the technique with the aid of mirrors.

I have noted (and discussed) the difficulty with my late wife and my daughters and all admit to the restriction in turning.—Letter in the *Daily Telegraph* (Richard Olszewski)

● Passengers were warned yesterday to expect above-inflation increases for the next few years. London Regional Transport chairman Wilfred Newton said the fares were to ease overcrowding. —*Daily Express* (Pat Clarke)

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DIARY

Sean French

I have already recommended in an earlier column that anyone should think twice before having an HIV test from their doctor (because of the effect it can have on life insurance applications). I have now learned that anyone with HIV should think even harder before applying for an American visa through normal channels.

In June this year, the Sixth Annual International Conference on Aids will take place in San Francisco. It must have seemed an appropriate venue and an appropriate time since the proceedings will end as the city's Gay Pride week begins. But the choice may now result in the conference being neutered, or even cancelled altogether.

These gatherings have become the principal forum for pooling information on the current state of knowledge about Aids. Doctors and researchers from all over the world attend but the organisers are also keen to encourage the participation of HIV-infected persons. "A comfort lounge and access to emergency medical care will be provided on-site," the conference brochure announces. However, the text continues: "We wish to alert foreign nationals with HIV infection that current immigration regulations may prohibit entry into the United States. The conference co-sponsors condemn immigration policies that discriminate against people with HIV infection."

In 1987, HIV positivity was added to the list of diseases that make a person ineligible for a US visa. As a result, anyone entering the country who is found to be in possession of the drugs associated with the condition will be sent straight home.

The American authorities have argued that this won't affect people attending the conference. All they need do is apply for special visas, including a letter from a doctor diagnosing the applicant's condition, and then a waiver of ineligibility will be given for a brief visit. To quote from a statement from a US immigration officer that I have seen, this waiver "is indicated by a code that should be intelligible only to US consular officers and immigration inspectors".

This is untrue. When the waiver is granted, the applicant's passport will be stamped with a visa with a number six at the bottom. This number means that the waiver has been granted to someone with a "dangerous and contagious" disease.

But since the usual response to applicants with diseases of this kind, such as syphilis, is to make them delay an application until the condition has been cured, the number six effectively stands for HIV, and that information is not classified.

The bizarre result is that all HIV-positive people attending the conference from abroad will—as the law currently stands—have their medical condition stamped in their passports, information which could have unforeseeable implications for those people's future.

There have been various priorities in attending to the Aids epidemic, but preventing HIV patients going to America can scarcely rank high among them. Since medical provision for patients who cannot afford to pay is worse in America than almost anywhere else in the developed world, it is likely that the government would find it more difficult to keep their own Aids patients *in*, than keep others out.

It certainly looks as if the US government's measures will be effective in keeping out those who might be helpful in advancing our knowledge of Aids. Groups ranging from gay organisations to the Haemophilia Society are already starting to drop out.

Governments should have learned by now that Aids is a complicated disease. But they're still attempting to combat it with their old prejudices against leprosy that weren't even true of leprosy.

I'm becoming worried about the reputation I'm getting as an expert on matters of extreme boredom. Now a correspondent, Melanie Friend, has sent me a number of *Car Numbers Magazine*, which she claims was pushed through a friend's letter box and which she rightly describes as "stunningly tedious".

There has only ever been one interesting car registration number in British motoring history and that is the one that is, or was, attached to Fiona Richmond's Jag: FU2. There are a few other semi-interesting examples: Jimmy Tarbuck's oxymoronic number plate, COM1C; and there's DEG5Y (Degsy) which was attached to a red BMW driven by Derek Hatton that powered past my brother on the motorway out of Liverpool.

If *Car Numbers* were full of articles about number plates like AB 1, then it would just be boring in an uninteresting way. What gives it a bizarre fascination for the real student of tedium is that it is full of articles about car numbers that would be uninteresting *even if you were interested in car numbers*.

In front of me as I write, there is an item, with a photograph, of a man called Peter Cavanagh standing in front of his car numberplate—8737 PK.

Now, I would always hesitate before calling a number boring. G M Hardy once called on the Indian mathematician Ramanujan and, stuck for conversation, remarked that the number of the taxi in which he had arrived, 1729, was a rather dull one. "No," replied Ramanujan, "it is a very interesting number; it is the smallest number expressible as the sum of two cubes in two different ways." ($1729 = 12^3 + 1^3 = 10^3 + 9^3$)

Nevertheless, I am going to take a risk and venture that 8737 PK is a number that even Ramanujan might have found dull, and the fact that its owner's initials are PC makes it more rather than less so.

Ms Friend rightly draws my attention to the magazine's letters page where there is a long letter from a Richard Leslie Willes, narrating at considerable length his efforts to obtain the numberplate RLW 15 which involved days of negotiation and a complicated transferral of plates between the various cars of his family.

But I've got to come clean and admit that I didn't find this magazine boring in the least. Man is a significance-seeking organism, someone said, and there could be no greater testimony to this than the extraordinary attention lavished on the DVLC codes in this journal.

De Gaulle once observed of France that it was impossible to unite a country that had 2,000 different kinds of cheese. And what hope is there for a country in which the number plate KIW 2924 is offered for sale at £150?

And speaking more personally, as a bicyclist, I can't help worrying that the readers of this mag are not just at liberty but, by definition, driving their crazy heirlooms around on the open road.

ROGER WODDIS

Costing the job

"There is no such thing in life as a free crumpet."—Patrick Milmo QC, in cross-examination of Andrew Neil

Beneath the wig the massive brain
That's mastered malfeasance and tort
Has secret yearnings to be known
For making a witty retort,
And getting noticed in the news:
"A titter ran round the court."

Yet there is justice in the joke,
With which one can only agree.
(We do not comment on a case
That's strictly sub judice).
As every sober journo knows,
No lunch can be had for free.

When offered plenty on a plate,
An editor doesn't think twice,
And even your most saintly tramp
Would venture his soul for vice.
But knowing things are going up,
The punter must pay the price.

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A fair cop?

Guildford, West Midlands, Wapping: the police are under intense scrutiny. A senior detective, known in the force as a policeman too honest for his own good, breaks rules of official secrecy and responds to public concern.

I am a policeman with 17 years' experience. I have worked as a detective at the sharp end in all sorts of cases and places. I now work mainly at the top end—on murder cases, armed robbery and the like—the cases which give us most pain.

I have never personally seen anyone "fit" a case around a suspect, or put a forged signature on their interview notes. But I am also a realist. I would never say that no one has ever been "verballed", that no policeman has ever given a suspect a set of notes to fit the circumstances, that evidence is never embroidered.

But the cases which are causing all the fuss—the West Midlands and Guildford cases —all belong in the past. There is a distinct gap between the old days and what happens now, both in the rules which govern police practice and in police attitudes as well. The public doesn't realise, and the media certainly don't tell them, that the cases which are currently being used to blacken the reputation of the whole force were investigated and tried in the days before Pace (the 1984 Police and Criminal Evidence Act).

The campaign against the police doesn't just occur in the media. As a working policeman, my character is constantly under attack in the courts. I do my job as honestly and well as I can, yet over the years I have been talked to as though I have crawled from under a stone. I have often felt like saying to a defendant, "Look, why don't you get out of the dock and let me and my officers stand here on trial instead?" Police officers are all born and bred in this country, we are made of the same flesh and blood, we have our strengths and weaknesses like other people. But we are society's dustbin-men: society leaves its rubbish to us, and treats us like rubbish too.

Society cannot win the miners' strike or Wapping. Society cannot keep the streets of our provincial city centres safe. Society cannot keep the lid on the persecuted. So we are ordered in and we must do as we are told. As a young policeman, I walked everywhere, quite safe in the knowledge that even if I got into a fight, the other fellow would pull his punches simply because I was in uniform. During the miners' strike, young lads were pitched into confrontation with young men very much like themselves, but no punches were being pulled. They were pitched into mass policing, travelling everywhere in vans.

And what happens afterwards? It is the police, pressed into service at the weak end, who have to take all the criticism.

It is hard for me to comment on the cases which cause all the concern. I do not know the actuality of them, the ins and outs of the

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Winston Silcott case, for example. If you ask me whether the Broadwater Farm inquiries were handled properly, then I would say no. But if you ask me if Silcott was totally innocent, that is quite another matter. This is a fairly modern case, and the police notes were almost certainly contemporaneous, and that makes "verbals" almost impossible.

Everyone is talking about the Guildford Four—in my view, if it had been the Guildford Three there would have been no fuss—and the Birmingham Six. Interestingly, the barristers who took part in the trial have no doubts about the men's innocence or guilt. What might be in doubt is how the verdicts were achieved. It's always possible to put forward a theory afterwards, and fit the evidence around it. Look at all the books about Jack the Ripper and Shakespeare's identity. In the Birmingham inquiry, an officer wrote an *aide memoire* for lawyers in the case; it's now being suggested that it was "a recipe for perjury".

I also remember other cases. Not so long ago there was a "Free George Davis campaign". Everyone was convinced that Davis was innocent and he was freed. Shortly afterwards he was picked up for armed robbery. What does that mean? Did an astute robber get out of prison by a clever trick?

But what worries me is that no one seems to appreciate that modern police work is quite different. As a young policeman, I would interview a suspect and record it afterwards in my pocket-book. I did that to the best of my ability, but quite obviously I would only get a flavour of what was said, not the real words. The assumption then was that this was all right; my summary was acceptable to the court. In fact, that was never right, but that was how British justice operated.

Then, about the time of the Birmingham Six trial, we began to be attacked on our pocket-book evidence, and public confidence in the police took a nosedive. So we began to write down contemporaneous notes in front of a suspect, and they were signed. Now, of course, we tape-record evidence. But the system—our own police organisation and the courts—haven't kept up with us. We aren't equipped to process the tape-recorded evidence and the courts don't have the facilities to run the tapes.

Take the usual run of cases that I handle at the top end of the market—murders, armed robbery, child abuse, say. I can go to court and have all the evidence tape-recorded, but most of that evidence will go unheard. Instead, the defence counsel will concentrate on the custody record: the notes of all the officers who have dealt with a defendant in custody. Perhaps 78 different police officers have made entries in that record. If just one of them has made a mistake—say a cell-duty officer has checked the cell and says the prisoner is there, but he's really been booked out, so the record reads: 10.20 Out for interview 10.30 Cell checked. Prisoner present 12.00 Prisoner returned—that 10.30am entry will get the case struck out. Forget the content of the interview; that's never heard. Forget the notes which say he's been taken out and returned. I would like to see the police go on to video interviews, but there are some with vested interests that oppose that. They want the police left open to attack.

We are accused of manipulating the evidence. Lawyers never are, though they do it all the time. They ask a question, then move on to cut out half a reply, because it doesn't suit them to have a full reply. They pick and choose among the evidence. I understand that the police must come under question, and I am as ready as anyone to scrutinise my conscience. But police officers do ask themselves why they are the only practitioners who come under attack. Does anyone ever ask the others with vested interests why they act as they do? Whoever asks a lawyer if he is attacking the police out of an undisclosed interest rather than a real desire to see justice done? You show me an honest lawyer and I will show you a rotten cop.

If you want a police force that doesn't attack the top end of crime, just keep on criticising us. For it is only on a very few cases—with a murderer, or a proper criminal, say—that we ever get real difficulties. There are occasional miscarriages of justice at the persecuted end of the scale, among people who are used to being abused, but no one is ever interested in them. But if a certain section of society is involved, or there is a political angle, then people stir up publicity and stand everything on its head.

What will happen is that coppers like me will stop investigating the hard cases. Any town like mine has a core of hardened criminals, and surrounding that circles of lesser criminals. Every time you go for one of the top criminals, you know that the pressure will be on. You know that you will have a hard time from the lawyers. They will infer that you are dishonest, that you have something to gain—whereas if you go for one of the petty boys, they will just go through the motions.

'Personally, I don't like policemen. I don't think that we are very nice people'

The danger is that the public will get a police force that decides that it simply isn't worth the pain: a bomb may be placed in a pub, people may be killed in a riot, and the police will think that it's not worth taking it on. There is no advantage to the police. I have had more shit from *detecting* crime than I have ever had from *not* detecting it. I could go through a year and never get my hands dirty. The stuff which solves itself, which makes up the bulk of criminal statistics, will still be on the record. The hard cases, the armed robberies or perhaps a tricky child abuse case, won't be investigated or solved, and no one will be brought to trial. But by the end of the year, everyone will have forgotten those cases.

Recently, I looked again at an armed robbery which had been closed, and I discovered who had done it. I did it straight, but now a court complaint has been lodged. I am not arguing that evidence is never tainted, but rather that it scarcely ever happens in a major case; there is simply no real opportunity and no real motive. Policemen don't want to gaol people wrongly; we are all aware that we hold people's liberties in our hands. And if we do gaol the wrong person, then the real murderer or robber is still at liberty. I know some of our critics argue that we are sometimes under such strong public pressure for a result that we will stick a case on anyone who is in the vicinity. But if that were right, then how is it that no one has been arrested for the Lockerbie disaster; and why did the police take so long to catch the Yorkshire Ripper?

I don't hold with beating or torturing a suspect. It seems to me to destroy what you stand for. When I was a young detective, I wasn't surprised to see someone get a smack around the ear; it was an accepted interview technique. People didn't know their rights then, and didn't question it. You may get an old-fashioned copper now who will still take a swipe at someone, or you get an assault in a confrontation on the street. But an assault in custody does not happen in the modern context. It was once part of police culture, but not now: other policemen won't stand for it. If I lost my temper interviewing a suspect and hit him, then there are 76 other officers and personnel, over whom I have no control, who may witness the assault or see the signs, and most of them will be willing to hear a complaint.

Personally, I don't like policemen. I don't think we are very nice people. We are bound to be warped by the horrible incidents in which we are involved, we are bound to get our hands dirty. We make horrible jokes to keep the horror at bay, and—yes—we are racist, and probably a lot more sexist, ageist and "wartist", too. But we are also what you, society at large, makes us. And when you attack us, we take it personally. We become more *clubified*, we draw in on ourselves. You force us to see ourselves as different.

On holiday, I do not tell people what I do for a living. But why should I, after 17 years in the service of those people, feel that defensive? All right, some of us joined to strut about in our uniforms but most of wanted to do something for the public. And whatever we become, it will be society and the media in particular that frames us.

Society devalues the work that we do. But if we don't do it, then there are plenty of people out there waiting to take over. Soon people won't need burglar alarms, but steel shutters. Not so long ago we could walk freely anywhere in our cities. Now we are insulted, assaulted, spat at, peed on. If you see a gang of young people at night in the average city centre and look for a policeman, you won't find him walking down the street on his own. If he's alone, he will be hiding in a side street.

If this is the world you want, then carry on forcing us to go on the defensive. My worry is that by the time we are able to go on the offensive again, it will be mass policing, and perhaps with guns rather than truncheons. I do not want to be in the police when that day comes, but come it will. ●

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The ambition machine

How can 229 powerless Labour MPs best fill their time? Sarah Benton reports on the misery of the Parliamentary Labour Party

Today's Labour leadership is a little like England under King John. The King is in his closet, surrounded by his loyal staff and advisers, enhancing his powers of kingship; meanwhile his barons are strengthening their individual fiefdoms, and the knights, grumbling in the backwoods, grow restless. The bishops in their academic fastnesses sulk at being ignored.

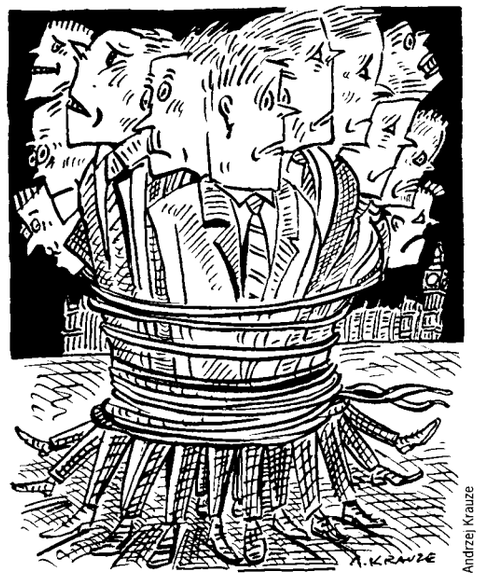
The analogy stops there, because the baronial shadow cabinet members are unequal in power and do not act in concert. Moreover, unlike feudal leaders, several of them hope to succeed to the kingship. John Smith and Gordon Brown in particular, with their solid Scottish bases, are perceived as working to this end.

The Magna Carta that was presented last summer, in the form of a PLP report on MPs' rights and duties, came from the knights of the back bench. Their work too is fundamentally driven by the hope of office. For the Parliamentary Labour Party is, above all, an "ambition machine", said Frank Dobson, a previous shadow Leader of the House, and one of those responsible for allocating duties to backbenchers. When the shadow cabinet demurred at those of their demands which would have weakened the front bench, the backbenchers meekly gave way. "No one wanted to be thought resentful that he hadn't got preferment," said a member of the review committee, which was set up in November 1988 under the chairmanship of Stan Orme.

The slight that gave impetus to this report was the exclusion of most backbenchers from the policy review process. The policy review was set up to give Labour ideological leadership. One of its architects, Tom Sawyer, the chairman of Labour's Home Policy committee, also hoped it would be a vehicle for changing the whole party, MPs included, involving them in a vibrant discussion of ideas and strategy. He said at last year's conference that he had been disappointed in this aim.

But the backbenchers were the most disappointed. For they only got to discuss the reviews after they had been written, then only for an hour, too late to amend them. Rather, the groups have served to strengthen the baronies of those shadow cabinet members astute enough to make use of them. Each of the seven review groups has a shadow cabinet member on it, and these have enhanced the ability of Smith, Brown and Bryan Gould in particular to make policy within their own fiefdom.

They have to do this, or face a vacuum. For although there is no disagreement that Neil Kinnock has thought consistently and strategically about how to turn the party "outwards"



Andrzej Krauze

The House of Commons at 11pm is better than a dismal flat in Battersea smelling faintly of unwashed socks

there is also little disagreement that "policy is now made in the leader's office". "I would like to see a more collegiate leadership," said one shadow minister, who accepts there is no sign of such a change.

The shadow cabinet includes the few PLP members known as thinkers—Robin Cook, Bryan Gould, Gordon Brown, John Smith. Of these, perhaps the shrewdest is John Smith. Unlike Roy Hattersley, who swells in self-importance in front of a TV camera, he seems to have a genuine modesty. And unlike Roy, he does not waste his time fighting symbolic battles against the left. In John Smith's handpicked Treasury team, there is the only black front-bencher (Paul Boateng), the only "out-gay" MP (Chris Smith) and one of the sharpest women MPs (Margaret Beckett).

Far more controversial is Gordon Brown's team. For shadowing the DTI, he has a team of seven; more than Nicholas Ridley has ministers. Robin Cook has three juniors at health and social security and only Bryan Gould's team totalling eight at environment is larger. But then, more than 30 per cent of all parliamentary time in the past two years has been taken up with environmental matters, including poll tax.

It was the prominence of front-bench teams which the PLP review highlighted, and which caused the heated controversy—more meetings in the PLP than on any other subject last year. There are currently 229 Labour MPs. Of these, 20 (including Neil Kinnock) are on the Parliamentary Committee. Another half dozen head departments (like Martin O'Neill at defence or Mark Fisher at arts). A further 57 MPs are in these departments—the front-bench "juniors". That gives a front bench of 83 MPs, or over one third of the PLP. But in their own standing orders, no more than one fifth of the PLP should be on the front bench.

The PLP report did not re-affirm this figure. It proposed the teams should consist of not more than three people. The shadow cabinet rejected this. According to one lurid report from the review committee, Kinnock came out of the meeting "shaking" with anger. Another said it had been blocked by Hattersley. "He is instinctively against democratic ways of working."

The proposal for small teams was an effort to break the PLP as "an ambition machine" and force on it a more collective way of working. The argument for large teams is that they involve more backbenchers. Neil Kinnock favours them because, said one committee member, "he thought numbers three, four and five should be the campaigners and communicators". "That's bollocks," said another. No constituency wants nos three, four or five coming to campaign. They all want number one.

Whether you go for the small view or the large depends largely on your assessment of the calibre of most backbench MPs. Virtually everyone agreed that the shadow cabinet regards backbenchers with feelings ranging from despair to contempt. The simple problem is, say the shadow ministers (in more or less polite words), that too many backbenchers are passive, preferring to "present received ideas" than think. Jack Cunningham says carefully that "you have to work very hard" to motivate some people. "If you take out the third who are on the front bench, and the third who are elderly war-horses, you're not left with much," said another. And reselection made the problem more acute. Eighteen months into a new parliament, an MP might be deselected, with three years of loyal service to go. MPs increasingly put their loyalty to constituency before their duty to parliament, for fear of losing their seat.

As for the proposal that backbenchers should chair the front-bench teams, as one committee

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member said: "If you were Robin Cook, would you want Audrey Wise chairing your strategy meeting?" This is a reference to the week when the NHS Bill was published and Ms Wise devoted her backbench committee to a meeting with the Radical Midwives' Association. Morally laudable, politically inept.

Depite the gloom over the backbenches, a number of their recommendations did go through; on getting women onto the Parliamentary Committee; on an induction course for new MPs, on a statement of aims for the PLP—the first ever. But despite such advances, MPs' collective roles will always be hedged in by party conference, policy and NEC over none of which they have any direct say. Their power is limited to the shadow cabinet—and there they were rejected.

Hence their retreat, if left out of a frontbench team, to somnolence, to individualism, or even Ron Brownism: a mistress to fill the long nights and a mission for the even longer days of a backbench MP far from home. "When you come here, you sink or swim on your own," says Clare Short. "People look for collective structures but can't find them." Not even in the informal evening round of clubs and dinners enjoyed by Tory MPs. "The feeling is," says Ms Short, "we shouldn't be sitting around having fancy dinners. We think we ought to be working because it's all so serious." Many MPs privately welcome their late hours, for fear of the lures of London life. And the House of Commons at 11pm is better than a dismal flat in Battersea smelling faintly of unwashed socks. The report strongly recommended a "welfare" service for MPs, many of whom are, says Ms Short, "miserable as sin. Women can moan but men can't. Their mums are so proud of them for being MPs, they think it's not manly."

What then of the "outsiders" the intellectuals who should be contributing to the new, collective ideological leadership? Although all the policy review groups have advisers, most are the same people who have been talking in Labour's ear for more than a decade. The response by every shadow cabinet member to the question of "outsiders" was "Who?" How do you pick those who are "sound", asked one, from all the nutters, and obsessives wanting to give advice? "Many ask for a meeting with me just because they want a meeting with me," said another.

They all looked to the Institute for Public Policy Research to provide the intellectual resource they know they need. Almost all are disappointed. Potentially, the IPPR, the Fabian Society (with a new general secretary) and the revamped parliamentary Tribune group could be this resource. But Labour is still hampered by its own ambivalence about leadership, and its fear of betrayal (by the unsound). Many speak wistfully about how the Tory right gained its intellectual élan in the 1970s. Most haven't grasped that the Tories were just as besieged by nutters and obsessives, and just as flattened by jargon-sodden academic papers. What made the difference were the skills of Ralph Harris of the Institute of Economic Affairs and a few others in weeding and "marketing" the ideas to a small, but receptive, audience. Enthusiastic élitists, they worked outside the defensive and hierarchical culture of party. They left the populist work to others. ●

Home to roost

Britain's financial problems—from pay inflation to high interest rates—are rooted in Thatcherite housing policy, argues John Plender

One of the most interesting features of the Thatcherite experiment is the extent to which it revolves around the political economy of housing. It is not simply that the Tories owe much of their past electoral success to the promotion of wider home ownership. Nor that the aftermath of the great borrowing boom and property bubble of the second half of the 1980s offers a more potent electoral threat to the government than almost anything else.

The more fundamental point is that the housing market is arguably Thatcherism's biggest micro-economic failure. Most of the country's present economic problems, ranging from pay inflation to the balance of payments, are in one way or another a reflection of structural imbalances in the market for land, bricks and mortar.

Thatcherism is nothing if it is not what the economists call a "supply side" programme—an attempt to reform the micro-economy by tackling specific weaknesses in individual markets. The central policy initiatives in the housing market have been the privatisation of council housing and the deregulation of housing finance. The limitations of those policies—which have been the mainstay of liberal economic reform in most Anglo-Saxon economies in the 1980s—stand thoroughly exposed after a decade in which homelessness has palpably increased and borrowing, whether by individuals or housing associations, has run riot.

The problem for any would-be reformer in housing is the starting point. Supply is self-evidently constrained in a small and crowded island, hedged about by planning controls and with a history of chaotic mismanagement in the rented sector. Demand has been encouraged by fiscal privileges for home owners, in the shape of mortgage relief up to £30,000 and exemption from capital gains tax on the main home.

Most politicians recognise the vote-winning appeal of these tax breaks. Most economists agree that such fiscal privileges inflate the value of housing stock and subsidise existing owners rather than the new buyers at whom they are supposedly directed. The outcome is also socially divisive. Tenants do not enjoy comparable relief against rental payments and have received a diminishing subsidy from rent controls under the Tories. On top of all this, an inflationary psychology has been built into the housing market as a result of repeated house price booms during the postwar period.

That background might suggest a need for caution in policy-making, especially on the demand side of the equation. This was not evident when the government chose, in the early 1980s, to deregulate part of the housing finance market. The clearing banks, hitherto barred from competing with the building societies, were allowed to invade the mortgage lending area. Constraints on the use of mortgages for purposes other than house purchase were also relaxed, allowing home owners to release the unrealised value, or "equity", of their homes.

The result of these changes was that mortgage loans were no longer rationed by queue. Instead of building societies rewarding long-term savers with a mortgage as and when the building society manager deemed fit, they suddenly found themselves competing on price with new entrants into the market who were keen to lend. Britain's personal sector naturally took advantage of this new opportunity to borrow on the security of its favourite asset and reorganised the liability side of the balance sheet—economists' argot for saying that anyone who wanted to hock themselves up to the gills did so and some who didn't were pressured into doing so anyway. The ready availability of so much finance helped oil the wheels of the council house sales programme. By mid-decade, the bandwagon was rolling along nicely—from the Tories' point of view.

If it had all stopped there, the causes for complaint would have been few. There are, after all, good libertarian arguments for removing the controls over the individual's ability to borrow and invest; and in cases where people borrowed beyond their means the government could at least claim the merit of consistency with underlying Thatcherite philosophy. Encouraging people to stand on their own two feet was always going to involve casualties.

But the real trouble set in when monetary policy smoothed the path from boom to bubble. The Tories' great macro-economic policy failure began in late 1985 with the plunge of sterling. By early 1987, the pound was undervalued on the exchanges by almost any of the yardsticks most frequently used by economists. Yet the chancellor of the day, Nigel Lawson, used every means from exchange market intervention to reducing rates, to prevent sterling from appreciating.

In mitigation, it has to be said that any chancellor of whatever political complexion would have felt obliged to relax monetary policy after the global stock market crash of 1987. But Lawson continued to cut rates in 1988 when the Federal Reserve in the US and the Bundesbank in West Germany had already started to

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Paul Bateman

The government's future hinges on how house prices are brought back into line with earnings

put on the brakes. House prices provided the transmission mechanism for the resulting monetary expansion, as house buyers recognised that the real cost of buying a house was negative because capital appreciation outweighed interest costs. The ratio of house prices to earnings soared to record levels and mortgage lenders advanced money on a higher and higher proportion of the value of a house.

What, you might well ask, has all this got to do with the balance of payments or the present pay spiral? A great deal is the short answer. For as private individuals saw the value of their homes rising exponentially, they felt richer and spent accordingly. A combination of excess demand colliding with a manufacturing base that had been severely pruned in the early 1980s prompted an import boom.

The connection can be seen rather more precisely on the capital account side of the balance of payments. The current account deficit, which is a measure of the extent to which we are living beyond our means, is the same as the difference between investment in the economy and domestic savings. With the rise in house values, private individuals felt less need to maintain the same level of net savings. That made it harder for total savings, which includes the savings of government and companies, to keep pace with a long overdue boom in fixed capital investment. To the extent that domestic savings were inadequate to finance that boom, Britain has been relying on foreigners to pump in capital. West German and other exporters have, in effect, been lending the British money with which to buy both consumer and investment goods.

The future of the government now hinges substantially on how house prices are brought back into line with earnings. The new chancellor John Major has already made it clear that he is reluctant to see too much of the burden fall on those who bought at the peak of the boom. Rather than confront a further rise in interest rates to stabilise a pound that looked exceptionally sick when he took office, he has been content to accept a sterling devaluation that will bring obvious inflationary consequences. With the margins thus protected, British employers can be relied on to concede sizeable pay claims; and with their mortgages still biting painfully, home owners who are lucky enough to have jobs are under huge pressure to demand more.

Meanwhile, people who are out of work are heavily constrained in their search for jobs by housing conditions. Under-investment in council housing and marked regional disparities in house prices help explain the paradox of high job vacancies in buoyant parts of the economy at a time of high unemployment. And the resulting inflexibility in the supply of labour is, of course, another aspect of the endemic British problem with pay inflation.

On present form, then, the traditional relationship between house prices and earnings will be re-established through a relatively modest fall in nominal house prices—however painful for those who borrowed heavily to buy at the peak—and a sizeable jump in nominal earnings. The adverse impact on unit labour costs will, not unnaturally, erode the competitiveness of British exporters. But that is the price the government is prepared to pay in order to avoid a bigger fall in house prices. It will take a near hurricane on the foreign exchange markets, one suspects, to persuade John Major to preside over an increase in interest rates.

What are the longer-term implications? The most fundamental point is that with about 60 per cent of the personal sector's non-financial assets held in the form of housing, there is still an awful lot of equity in the housing system waiting to fuel another boom, as well as an inflationary psychology that has come through the Thatcherite experience reinforced. The temptation for a Tory chancellor to unbutton before the next election will be overwhelming. And the risks will be greatly magnified if Britain fulfils its commitment to join the exchange rate mechanism of the European Monetary System, since the initial impact will be to persuade the markets that sterling is a more stable currency. Interest rates would have to be reduced to prevent an excessive appreciation of the pound, thereby imparting another boost to the housing market.

It follows that an incoming Labour government might well have to confront the consequences of yet more monetary excess. And John Smith, canny Scot that he is, looks well equipped for the task, being financially orthodox to an almost worrying degree. Apart from limiting mortgage relief to the standard rate of tax (on the assumption that even John Smith would be reluctant to scrap the whole relief), the capital gains tax exemption looks ripe for excision. But even more important than the fiscal side of the argument is the financial issue.

The fashionable economic view on credit controls is that they are unworkable in today's highly sophisticated and internationalised markets. That is probably true in relation to the wholesale financial markets in which governments, banks and multinationals conduct their financial affairs. But retail influence is still conducted mainly on a national basis, and many continental European countries continue to operate various forms of control over mortgage lending.

This is no bad time to be looking at a system like the West German one, which incorporates a reward for thrift—or at least a penalty on those who wish to borrow before demonstrating their saving credentials. After the binge in the 1980s, some financial orthodoxy—or should one say Victorian values?—might not come amiss. ●

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Doing it our way

The Sinatra doctrine now rules in eastern Europe. But Bush still enforces an imperialist Monroe doctrine in the Americas. Carlos Fuentes argues for a "Marilyn" Monroe doctrine instead

In December 1968—more than 21 years ago—Gabriel Garcia Márquez, Julio Cortázar and I travelled to Prague. Our purpose was to show our solidarity with the Czechoslovak reform movement, which has come to be called the Prague Spring. That August, the troops of the Warsaw Pact had invaded Czechoslovakia to terminate Alexander Dubcek's experiment in democratic socialism. At the time of our arrival, Dubcek was still formally in office, and even though Prague was surrounded by Soviet tanks, the only visible signs of the invasion there were a few bullet-riddled walls and a shattered glass partition in Wenceslas Square.

A soldier from one of the Soviet Union's Asiatic republics had smashed into it; he had never seen a glass wall before. The Czechoslovaks, descendants, after all, of Franz Kafka and the good soldier Schweik, instantly put up a sign: "Nothing Can Stop the Soviet Soldier."

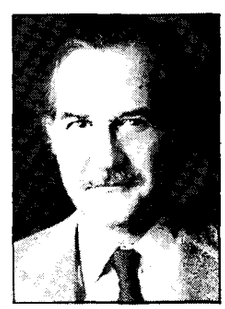
As it turned out, the glass-breaking soldier was not an anomaly. Many of the Soviet soldiers were Asians who spoke neither Czech nor Russian. They were told they were being sent to put down a revolt in one of the Soviet republics and, thinking they were welcome liberators, they were all smiles as they drove their tanks into the city. Czechoslovak girls would offer them flowers and then spit in their faces when they bent down to take them. It was then that other wounds appeared, the internal wounds caused by this assault on socialism, on law and, above all, on hope.

What Dubcek and his advisers were seeking was, in light of the changes now taking place in central Europe, remarkably modest. "Socialism with a human face," simply put, consisted in carrying out Marx's dictum about the withering away of the state and its gradual replacement by the energies of civil society. Czechoslovakia, which had a tradition of political democracy and a well-developed industrial base, not only could take that step but actually did take it. The Prague Spring saw the proliferation of activities carried out by social groups within and tangential to the state. Farmers, students, industrial workers, intellectuals, people in the information sector, even bureaucrats began to take initiatives to organise, to demand effective representation and to develop their own press. As a counterbalance, they demanded a democratisation of the Czechoslovak Communist Party and a constructive response from the state to this social dynamism.

But the petrified Communist state could make no political response to these demands being made by the very society that, ironically, the state had been involved in creating for two decades. Dubcek's reform group emerged as a response to the voices of society. That is, *glasnost* and *perestroika* were born 22 years ago in Czechoslovakia. It is only natural that they now return to their native land and replace the doctrine used to justify the aggression of 1968. The Brezhnev Doctrine announced that the Soviet Union had the right to intervene militarily to ensure that any nation already within the Soviet sphere of influence (or even one that might someday be within it) did not drift away. In so doing, Brezhnev supplied powerful arguments to US hard-liners: those who fall into the hands of the Soviet Union never escape.

When Garcia Márquez, Cortázar and I reached Prague in the cold winter of 1968, the operative fiction—Kafka-cum-Schweik—was that the Russians were not there at all, that the "spring" could go on right into winter. While we couldn't refer directly to the Brezhnev Doctrine, we could talk about the Monroe Doctrine, so that when we mentioned US intervention in Latin America, everyone understood that we were talking about Soviet intervention in eastern Europe.

Today the Brezhnev Doctrine is dead, and the Soviet government's witty Foreign Ministry spokesman, Gennadi Gerasimov, whose sense of humour derives from Gogol and Bulgakov, says that now it's the Sinatra Doctrine that's operative in eastern Europe: "I'll do it my way" is the order of the day. Or as we say in Mexico, *Cada chango a su mecate* ("Every monkey up his own tree"). But the demise of the Brezhnev Doctrine in eastern Europe is not being echoed by the demise of the Monroe Doctrine in the other theatre of the cold war, the US sphere of influence in Central America and the Caribbean.



Carlos Fuentes is a Mexican left-wing intellectual and leading novelist. Born in 1928, he established himself as a powerful writer with *Where the Air is Clear*. Novels such as *Terra Nostra*, and *The Old Gringo* draw on history and myth to link destinies of countries and individuals. He also writes essays and stories. *Aura* is published in April by André Deutsch.

The Monroe Doctrine is the most illustrious cadaver in all the Americas. It was born with more holes than a Swiss cheese. How could President Monroe, in 1823, proscribe any European presence in the New World without weakening the legitimacy of the United States, whose independence would never have been achieved without the military intervention of Bourbon France?

The application of the Monroe Doctrine as a weapon of intervention by the United States in Latin America reached the highest pitch of fantasy during the Falklands/Malvinas war. The US ambassador to the United Nations, Jeane Kirkpatrick, urged the Argentine military to embark on its disastrous adventure. In exchange for that support, the Argentines would train the Nicaraguan *contras*. But both the Argentine government and President Ronald Reagan had to realise, when the chips were down, Washington would naturally support its old Nato ally, Britain, and not its remote South Atlantic lackey, President Galtieri.

Once again it was clear that the US did not intend to use the Monroe Doctrine against Europe but against Latin America. It was simply a weapon to be deployed against any Latin American government that might be in conflict with Washington, any government that Washington might claim was working for "extra-continental" interests. It was the same argument that the US used against Mexico and the Germany of the Kaiser, against Argentina and the Axis powers, against Guatemala, Cuba, Brazil, Chile and Nicaragua with regard to "international communism". It is, therefore, hardly surprising that Latin American nations have from time to time preferred to align themselves with the distant empire, Moscow, rather than the all-too-nearby one, Washington. If only Latin Americans had been allowed to follow, unobstructed, their own national destinies, without pressures from either side, how much confusion, how many perversions, how many reversals and, of course, how many human tragedies might have been avoided.

It is one of the paradoxes of this *fin de siècle* that, in the era of economic interdependence and instant communication, political nationalism should be enjoying such a powerful resurgence. From Armenia and Turkestan to the Ukraine and Lithuania, from Northern Ireland to Brittany and the Basque region, regional nationalism is sending tremors through the seemingly solid foundations of European unity. The

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Mike Goldwater/Network

"single European home" is going to require an original and flexible federalism if it is going to respond successfully to these challenges.

In Latin America, nationalism is not limited to more or less isolated regions but is an important factor in the identity of extant nations. Mexican, Nicaraguan or Venezuelan nationalism is not spilling over frontiers and endangering neighbouring countries and is certainly not destabilising states. These nations define themselves by means of nationalism. We must, therefore, recognise nationalism as a dynamic factor, essential for the solution of internal problems, which should remain free of outside meddling. We Latin Americans will only be able to face the challenges of our times if we first overcome this problem of external intervention.

Mexico and Brazil have the advantage of having consolidated their national sovereignty. Now they can test that sovereignty against the problems of political and economic modernisation. Countries like Nicaragua, on the other hand, must defend their nascent national institutions against constant external aggression. In fact, the Sandinista government has defeated that foreign-supported aggression—just as Benito Juárez defeated the Mexican *contras*—and now demands its last vestiges be expunged. The end of the *contras* should also be the end of a long history of US intervention in Nicaragua.

George Bush needs enemies in order to show off the Manichean machismo of the Good Empire

The legitimacy of the current Nicaraguan government derives in part from its being the first to act without being under Washington's tutelage. The February elections will continue the process of national recovery, the consolidation of national institutions and the growth of energy in civil society because of the active participation of 20 opposition parties. There is no way to compare what is happening in Nicaragua with the situation in El Salvador. The Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front was not invented abroad; it arose in El Salvador and will

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either survive or die there. The *contras* never won a battle in Nicaragua: the FMLN controls much of El Salvador and is capable of launching an offensive in the capital itself to prove to President Alfredo Cristiani that he should negotiate seriously or face interminable bloodletting and a no-win situation. To accuse Nicaragua of sending arms to the FMLN is to apply yet another doctrine, one invented by the Mexican conservative ideologue Lucas Alamán: blaming internal problems on foreign governments.

The Bush administration is being criticised for its lack of initiatives with regard to the changes in eastern Europe. I think it is more to be criticised for its abysmal behaviour—threats or inaction—in Central America and the Caribbean. To go on arming the Salvadoran government while demanding that the Soviet Union stop arming the Nicaraguan government is not only a refusal to recognise that Moscow has in fact suspended all arms shipments to Central America but also a refusal to negotiate the compromise that Soviet President Gorbachev and Latin American diplomats have so often suggested, namely, that *no one* ships arms to Central America.

Even if that were to happen, Bush—the last, albeit the most timid, of ideologues—would still be blind to the obvious facts about Central American nationalism. To call Violeta Chamorro "Washington's candidate" is to give her the kiss of death. It turns the Nicaraguan election into a struggle between Ortega and Bush, just as the 1946 Argentine election forced voters to choose between Juan Domingo Perón and his principal enemy, the US Ambassador Spruille Braden. Naturally, the national candidate won.

Bush cannot limit his responses to Gorbachev in Central America to a denunciation of Soviet arms—which, of course, are his justification for sending US arms. He must support the principle that neither great power send arms and thereby proclaim the Sinatra Doctrine for all of Central America. Every country should go its own way, with no outside interventions whatsoever. Then we would see just how quickly negotiations would take place in El Salvador and with what vigour national institutions would develop in Nicaragua.

Bush's hypocrisy in Central America is an insult. He takes a paternalistic attitude that does not recognise the ability of Salvadoreans or Nicaraguans to resolve their own conflicts or determine their own destinies. Is there anyone who really believes that the victory of the FMLN in El Salvador or Daniel Ortega in Nicaragua will endanger the US or constitute a Soviet beachhead in Central America? In the Gorbachev era, with Solidarity governing Poland, with the Czechoslovak Politburo in total collapse, with a multi-party Hungary requesting admission to the Council of Europe, with the removal of the Berlin wall, how can anyone think that Gorbachev has either the intention or the ability to set up Stalinist dictatorships whose advantage to the Soviet Union would be doubtful—and logistically impossible—in countries so geographically remote? No one would want to be a spoke in the wheel of such a *troika*—assuming *troikas* had wheels.

The real problem, of course, is Cuba. Fidel Castro is increasingly isolated from his old allies in the Communist world. A stormy session of the Cuban cabinet in 1968 debated the question of whether Cuba should denounce the invasion of Czechoslovakia. The Brezhnev Doctrine reinforced the perpetuation of the Monroe Doctrine in the Americas. The Cubans hoped the Czechoslovaks would resist, but there was no Sierra Maestra anywhere near the Danube. Castro, once again, was obliged to follow the policy he could enact instead of the policy he wanted to enact.

Is it possible for Fidel Castro to lead today the revolution he always wanted: Latin American and far-reaching, but a revolution that would not sacrifice democratic freedoms or social transformation? Will age, the tentacles of the system or perhaps a love of the personal exercise of power keep him from it?

The human drama in this dilemma cannot be overlooked, Castro can claim that for Cuba the cold war is not over. And everything suggests that George Bush, like his predecessors, does not want a reformed Cuba but a defeated Cuba. Given such a reality, there can be no movement on either side, just paralysis. If only Bush and Castro would simultaneously and dramatically declare an end to the cold war in the Caribbean, the mutual opening of frontiers and the demolition of their two walls. That's right, the Havana wall, so that Cubans could have free access to information and so that political prisons could be emptied. But the Miami wall must also come down: the blockade must be lifted and US citizens allowed to travel to Cuba, trade with Cuba and recognise Cuba.

But if in the New World we either cannot or choose not to act with the clearsighted dramatism of the Europeans, it is certainly necessary that the first steps be taken for the eventual removal of the Miami and Havana walls. This must be done delicately, over a reasonable period of time and with good faith on both sides. Relations between Cuba and the US, as lopsided as they are, and as insolent and aggressive as the White House has been and continues to be towards its former protectorate, reveals a mutual insecurity.

Castro is afraid that any relaxation of tension will be used against him by the gringos. Bush is afraid that, deprived of an enemy in Europe, the US will have nowhere to show off its Manichean machismo. Where else can he demonstrate, with quasi-religious piety, that the Good Empire is facing up to the Evil Empire but in Cuba and Central America? The rest of the world, however, sees in Bush's regime the profound insecurity of an empire in decline, and its belief in and respect for the US continues to diminish.

An initiative by George Bush that would bring the agenda of the US in the Caribbean and Cuba up to date would restore his country's diplomatic prestige, which Mikhail Gorbachev and his brilliant policies have stolen.

Are we going to be witnesses to the paradox that it will be the Soviet Union that dispenses with its useless ideological baggage while the US persists in dealing with the world only in ideological terms? If the Soviet Union can give up the Brezhnev Doctrine for the Sinatra Doctrine, the US can give up the James Monroe Doctrine for the Marilyn Monroe Doctrine: let's all go to bed wearing the perfume we like best. ●

This article was translated by Alfred Mac Adam

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Indian take-away

Mohan lives in a Bombay shanty-town. By day he studies for a BA. At night, he works as a rent-boy. Jeremy Seabrook reports

The mother peers through thick glasses into the pot of vegetables that is cooking on a *chulla* of three stones. The smoke from the coconut husks she uses as fuel fills the hut with choking fumes. She removes her glasses and wipes her eyes with the edge of her dark green saree. She places a metal plate before her son, and watches him eat. It is because of him that she is able to see at all. If he hadn't worked so hard, she would never have been able to afford the operation that saved her sight. "Mohan is good to us. Without him, we would not still be together."

They came from a village not far from Pune 20 years ago, a place where the water table has been lowered by the intensive cultivation of sugar cane by rich farmers. The little land they owned was lost, because Mohan's father was mentally sick, and unable to work. One day, Sushila took the four children with her by bus to Bombay. She had never seen a city before. She cowered under the bridge at Byculla in terror, not knowing how to find food or shelter. Mohan remembers her rocking to and fro and crying, begging from passers-by. It was the monsoon. Water spread in dark puddles, rust-coloured streams came through the metal bridge.

A woman in a nearby block of flats took pity on them. She allowed them to stay in the hallway, and offered Mohan's mother a job as a domestic servant. When the rains ceased, they went to live on the pavement, and later, through a distant kinsman, they were able to rent the hut. Mohan left school to work, first rag-picking, then to help on a tea-stall. From the age of seven, he had been left in charge of the crude pavement dwelling, never leaving it while his mother was at work, guarding the few vessels and clothes and the food that was hung from the ceiling to make it safe from the rats.

The hut in Achanak Colony (Achanak, Hindi for 'suddenly', because that's how it appeared) is worth, they say, 50,000 Rupees (£1,850), even in this noisy, dirty railway slum. But this is Bombay, where land prices are as high as in London or New York. There is no running water and no WCs, and people have to perform their daily functions in full view of the passing suburban trains. Women rise at 4.30 or 5am to wash in privacy on the tracks, briefly silent in the pre-dawn lull, and to fetch water from the public taps, which later in the day will be reduced to a muddy trickle.

The slum clings to the railway colony, precariously constructed against the compound wall. It straddles a disused railway line, the special track that used to convey the station master from his residence to the station at Byculla in the days when such officials came and went in daily colonial ceremony. The rails have now been partly buried beneath *kachhera* and dust. Some of the houses are quite substantial, a second storey has been added, Mangalore tiles, a shop front with packets of Britannia biscuits and Lux soap and Surf washing powder for those who can afford such luxuries.

In Bombay at least, people make a living, insert themselves into an infinitely flexible urban economy. There is Abdul, who produces the beautiful zari embroidery that women from Colaba and Malabar Hill come to buy for their daughters' weddings. There is the family who live by making brushes of soft grass that comes in a truck once a week all the way from Assam; a metal factory where they make handles for kerosene stoves, a clothing factory, where six men sit at Singer machines in a cramped space making shirts for export.

Nobody had anything when they first came here. Mohan's mother has seen them improve themselves, add a tiled floor, an electric fan, a bicycle. Many here are from Orissa, Uttar Pradesh, Untouchables, Muslims, neo-Buddhists from Maharashtra, converted by Dr Ambedkar, as Mohan's family were, after Ambedkar disagreed with Gandhi and despaired of reforming Hindu attitudes towards untouchability. Here, they all live together in relative security, apart from the danger to children from the trains that pass 20 hours a day. Only last week, a little girl was mutilated when she fell under the commuter train to Bombay's Victoria Terminus. Her family are poor. She may well finish up with a rubber pad beneath the stumps of her legs, begging on the sidewalk.

Sushila thanks God that Mohan stands between them and such destitution. Mohan's sister has been deserted by her husband. He drinks, and is vain and has no useful skill to earn a living. The only reminder of him is the year-old baby in his tin cot, suspended from the roof

The shanty-town has no running water or WCs. People wash and perform daily functions in public

Adam Hinton/Select

Mohan's family hut is worth about £1,850. Bombay land prices are as high as in London or New York

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of the hut. The cot sways on its frayed rope; the child looks up placidly at the soot-blackened ceiling of corrugated metal.

Mohan is also responsible for his two younger brothers, who are studying. He doesn't want them to leave school as he had to. They must get a good job, in "service", a safe government job, perhaps even go to the Gulf. Mohan also sends money each month to the village, to pay for his father to be cared for by relatives. In spite of these expenses, the family eat twice a day, even though Mohan's mother can no longer see well enough to do domestic work. The women in the flats are so fussy, inspecting every little ball of fluff, every smear on the cooking pots.

The only furniture in the hut is a wide metal bed and a lumpy bedroll, some tin chairs, one shelf of brass vessels, and a picture of the Buddha, garlanded with faded marigolds. There is white strip lighting, and a tin chest, in which Mohan keeps his certificates and prizes from school, his matriculation certificate, his 2nd year BA, the certificate for singing, for *kabbadi*, for writing Marathi. He goes to college in the afternoon, studying to complete his BA; then he may get an even better job in the hotel where he is working.

Adam Hinton/Select

In Bombay, at least, people can insert themselves into an infinitely flexible urban economy

Glossary

Chulla — Informal brick stove
Kachhera — Vegetable refuse, rubbish
Kabbadi — Wrestling game
Channa — Roast nuts
There are 27 Rupees to the £1.

Or rather, that is where Mohan tells his family he is working. Actually, he works as a male prostitute, although that is perhaps too extravagant a word for the clumsy and unsatisfactory encounters that earn him a livelihood. Mohan is now in his late 20s. He is not really handsome, his complexion is pitted, his nose too wide, although he has a warm smile that displays perfect white teeth. Before he goes to work in the evenings, he powders his face with ash-coloured dust to make himself appear younger. In the daytime, he is a quite different person, serious, devoted to his family, dedicated to the cause of the poorest, committed to the Dalit Panthers, the militant Untouchable movement.

When he assumes his night-time role, Mohan alters the intonation of his voice; he doesn't walk, but glides along the burnt-up grass of the Azad Maidan, weaving in and out of the shadows of the cerise and purple bougainvillaea, playing the seducer and saying to the men who linger in the park on their way to the railway terminus, "Hel-lo and how are *you*? Would you like to get to know a real superstar?" The negotiations with clients are crude and brief, mouth or backside; and then they disappear into the shadows. Because Bombay is the destination of so much migration by lone males there are three men for two women in the city. Indeed, the air of Bombay, warm and humid throughout the year, is heavy with repressed male sexuality and erotic longing. The women at the barred windows of the brothels in Kamathipura are often captive, flesh-and-blood prisoners of lonely men's dreams.

Many of Mohan's clients are married. They rarely speak to him. The sex is hasty, clumsy and resented. The men are often violent and abusive afterwards, sometimes refusing to pay the 30 or 40R (£1.50). He is the object of neither affection nor curiosity to those who view him only as a vehicle for the release of what they see as shameful and urgent desires.

He finds the absence of tenderness, or even of recognition, painful. To console himself, he has made friends with some of the people who live on the pavements outside the public garden. He will sometimes go and talk to Shanti Devi and her daughters, for instance, who keep a *channa* stall on the road. Such beautiful girls, who emerge fresh and clean each morning from the flimsy polythene covering that is their only shelter, fixed to the wire-mesh fence of the compound.

Then there is Tarabhai, who fled from Solapur to escape impossible debts to the moneylender, and came to live under a palm-tree that cracked and broke at the height of last year's monsoon. Tarabhai, her husband and three daughters, two of whom have babies at the breast, lie on a piece of sacking in full view of the passers-by. Tarabhai and her husband make bows and arrows of pliable bamboo, which they cover with gold paper, and then place a crimson feather in the arrow. Since the Ramayana and Mahabharata have been serialised on TV, children have deserted guns for this more archaic weaponry, and for the moment there is a living to be made, selling them on the beach at Chowpatty.

Next to them is the family of the lone woman and her six young children, who work making jasmine garlands as hair ornaments for rich women as they step out of their taxis into the smart restaurants of Colaba. They buy the jasmine petals at 40R a kilo, and sell each braid for 50 paise (less than 2p) each. From the kilo, they will make 140 clusters, making a profit of about 30R. All the children—aged from five to 12—work together, threading each flower onto a cotton with deft movements. The mother is a widow, whose husband's family turned her out after his death.

Mohan finds comfort in talking with the pavement dwellers, especially the women. They do not ask him why he is here, what he does every evening behind the clumps of bougainvillaea in the shadow of the matted aerial roots of the banyan tree. Mohan knows that he must find some other way of ensuring the family income. For one thing, he is nearly 30; there are many younger boys. There are even some who will offer homosex free. That spoils the market, ruins it for those who have to make a living.

And he is unwell. He has a constant cough, which he says is from the pollution of Bombay traffic; but he daren't go for a medical check-up, because, he says, he can't afford it, but perhaps because he fears what he might discover. He went for a job cleaning at one of the big hotels in Colaba. The pay is 800R a month, less than half the money he is making now. He worked there for four weeks, reducing his visits to the Maidan to weekends only. If he wants to make up the money, he will have to take a second job, and that will mean giving up his studies.

Mohan no longer knows whether he is gay or not. The joyless encounters have hardened him. He was sexually ignorant until he was 17; when he discovered masturbation and saw his own semen, he was appalled, and believed that he had broken something inside his body. He was followed home from work one night by a doctor, who paid him 50R. Mohan knows that he doesn't *like* men. In any case, his feelings are caught up with the fate of his family. He says that the men who use him treat him in the same way that they treat women.

It is 9.30 in the evening. The police clear the hustlers from the park. Mohan wipes the traces of powder from his face. Tonight, he has a swollen lip and a bruised cheek. Someone hit him and ran away without paying. He waits in the warm night that smells of piss and jasmine, for the red bus that will take him to Byculla. In spite of tonight's violent encounter, it was a good evening's work. In his pocket he has 50R—almost £2. ●

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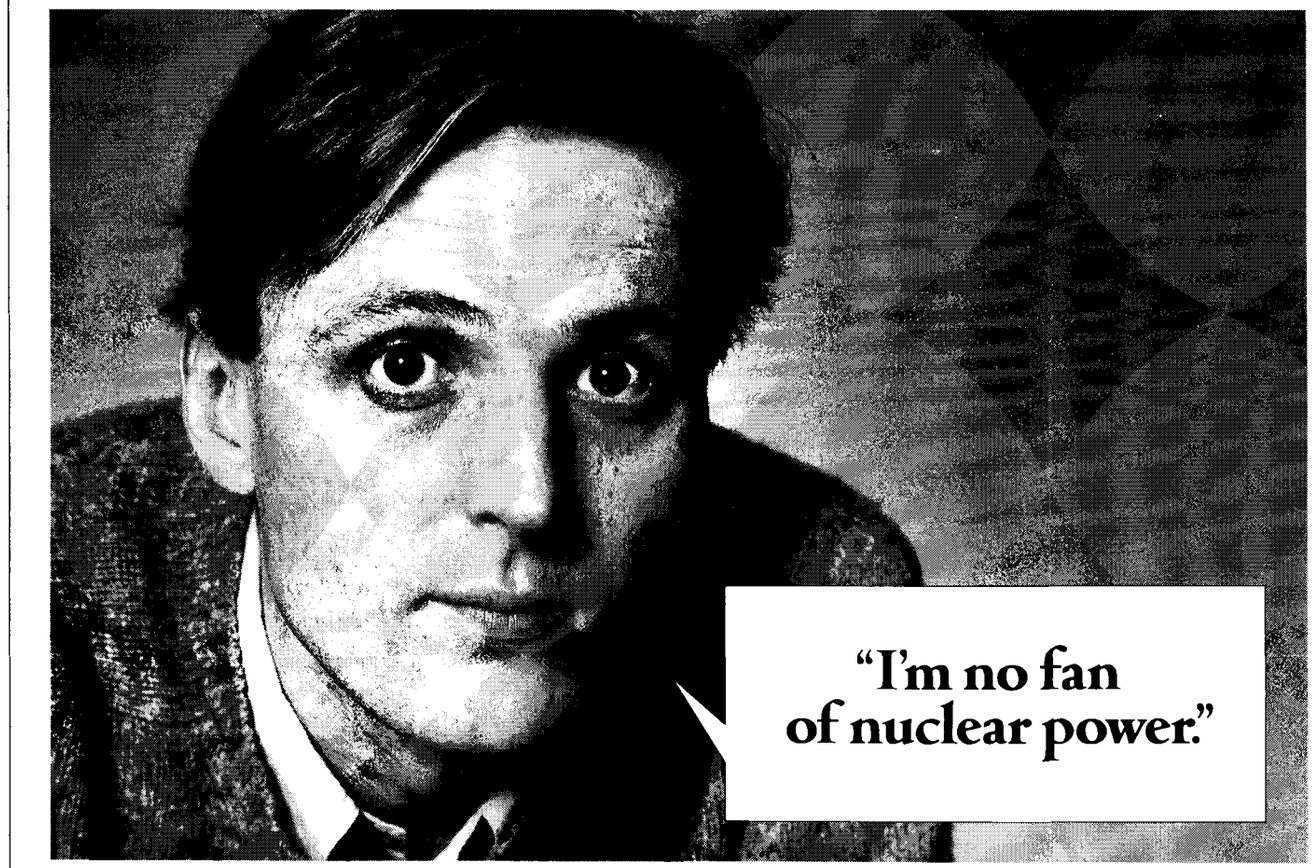

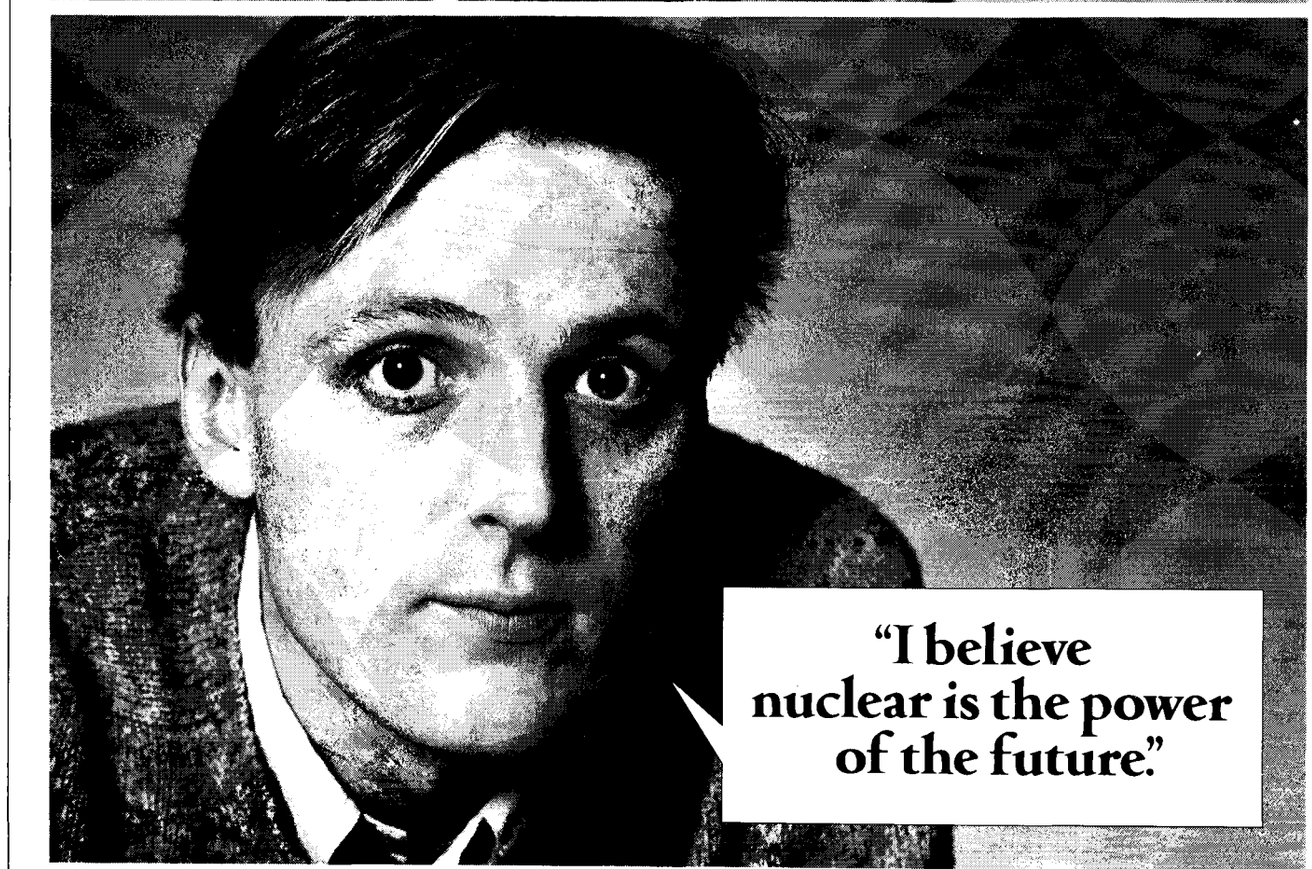

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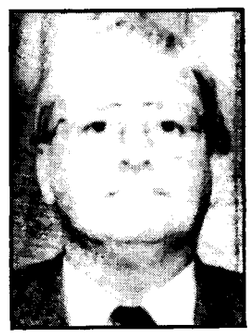
Here we go?

The Taylor report on Hillsborough is a sign that more than the lady is for turning

Well, we now all know that Lord Justice Taylor has "bottle". The good judge has not only confounded cynicism about the role of the judiciary in government inquiries with his final report on the Hillsborough disaster, but by standing firmly against Mrs Thatcher's "ID scheme" he has supplied, very late in the day, the good sense and courage which is supposed to be found in Parliament.



Ian Taylor

No-one in football or the police believed that this foolish scheme would work. But a Parliament dominated by true believers failed to show the practical realism necessary and Mrs Thatcher has been forced to accept yet another U-turn. Coming only months after the U-turn on privatising the nuclear industry, and a few weeks after the banks refused to operate the student loan scheme, there is now the unmistakable sense of a government which is so utterly committed to its own prejudices that it has itself lost its own practical touch; this is no longer a government which can claim that, unlike Labour, it works with the grain of human nature and so produces workable solutions.

The Football Supporters Association was already celebrating Taylor's bodyblow to the ID scheme last weekend. But they were no more ready for the force of the final report than Mrs Thatcher herself. A close reading of Taylor's interim report last August seemed to show that he would fudge the issue of the perimeter fences—the "cages"—which were so crucial to the scale of human disaster at Hillsborough.

But Taylor did find the anger and commitment to demand the removal of the "cage-like fences" which reminded him of prison, and which he insists are "inconsistent with a sports ground being for pleasure and recreation". He also insists that their removal would be the key symbolic act in signalling what he calls "a new future for football". This, he believes, must rest on a radical revision of the relationship of the football authorities to the spectators.

Taylor puts forward a set of imaginative ideas for the renovation of football grounds. They don't simply consider the central issue of safety, but aesthetic and utilitarian aspects as well. One part of his proposals—but one part only—is the recommendation that football league stadia should go all-seater. This government with its authoritarian instincts, has seized on this proposal.

I believe that Roy Hattersley's instincts are sounder than Taylor's or David Waddington's. Taylor has talked to fans about their desire to stand, but he hasn't quite heard what they have to say. He quotes fans as saying that they want to stand where their father and grandfather stood before them, but manages to sum up their preference as follows: "They like being part of an amorphous seething crowd and do not wish to have each his own place in a seat."

That is a classic outsider's view; in fact, home fans normally always take the same place among the same set of companions every fortnight, and they don't so much *lose* as *fuse* their own identity in the crowd. This is a tradition which clubs can respect and still encourage families to attend matches; for most grounds are already divided by their structures and customs into distinct areas in which spectators can sit or stand at ease, and other areas where they can join the "seething" crowd.

Many Tories and free marketeers wanted to see an end to football as a mass sport

But Taylor's proposal is symptomatic also of a wider concern which must surely be welcome: the need for an overall modernisation of stadia and the facilities they offer. There is a powerful sense of the judge's dismay at the squalid conditions which are visited upon fans in Britain, and also the insistent refrain that the squalor makes a major contribution to the "squalid" behaviour which results. Taylor obviously believes that these conditions can only be rectified by imagination and committed local leadership, with the understanding support, if necessary, of public as well as private capital.

There is no question that Taylor thinks that the guarantee of safety, comfort and pleasure for football spectators is, ultimately, a responsibility of national government—a responsibility which should be shared with local authorities. In the House of Commons last week Mrs Thatcher clearly recognised the dangers of such a vision. If the responsibilities of government were to be recognised in this arena of public life, then what might be asked of government in other areas of public concern, like British Rail, privatised bus services, congested city centres, a dilapidated housing stock. Responsibility was hastily diverted—to the football clubs themselves. They might consider spending more of the £70 million spent on transfer fees last season on the people who watch football, Mrs Thatcher said grandly. No commentator in the national media picked up on the curiosity of Mrs Thatcher's quite strategic disavowal of the end result of the play of free market forces in football.

The overall political significance of Taylor may not be apparent for some time. What can be said with some certainty now, however, is that the government's initial response shows signs of a certain resignation. It is not only that the government cannot think of a realistic response to the hooligan question. It is also that other, largely ideological, expectations have not been fulfilled.

In the aftermath of the Heysel stadium disaster, in 1986, significant sections of Conservative and free-market opinion wanted to see an end to association football as the mass sport of the British weekend. A *Sunday Times* editorial spoke with typical hair-on-chest gusto of "a slum sport . . . played by slum people". Earlier, in 1982, the *Spectator* argued, triumphantly, that soccer and Labour had risen together and were falling together: "The fights on the terraces are not merely unfortunate adjuncts to a mass sport: for many of those who attend they are the main point of the thing. The same applies to the squabbles of the Labour Party."

In the first months of the 1990s, Labour is once again ahead in the opinion polls, attendances at football matches are rising, and Lord Justice Taylor is arguing, incontrovertibly, for a "new future", along with consumers of football, transport, health, housing and welfare, all of whom are starved of imaginative leadership and adequate funding. In the meantime, the government talks still of war against the hooligans without realising that this doesn't connect in the public mind with the full horror of Hillsborough.

There is a sense that this government, increasingly square at the back, is playing defensively, without popular acclaim. What do you think, Brian?

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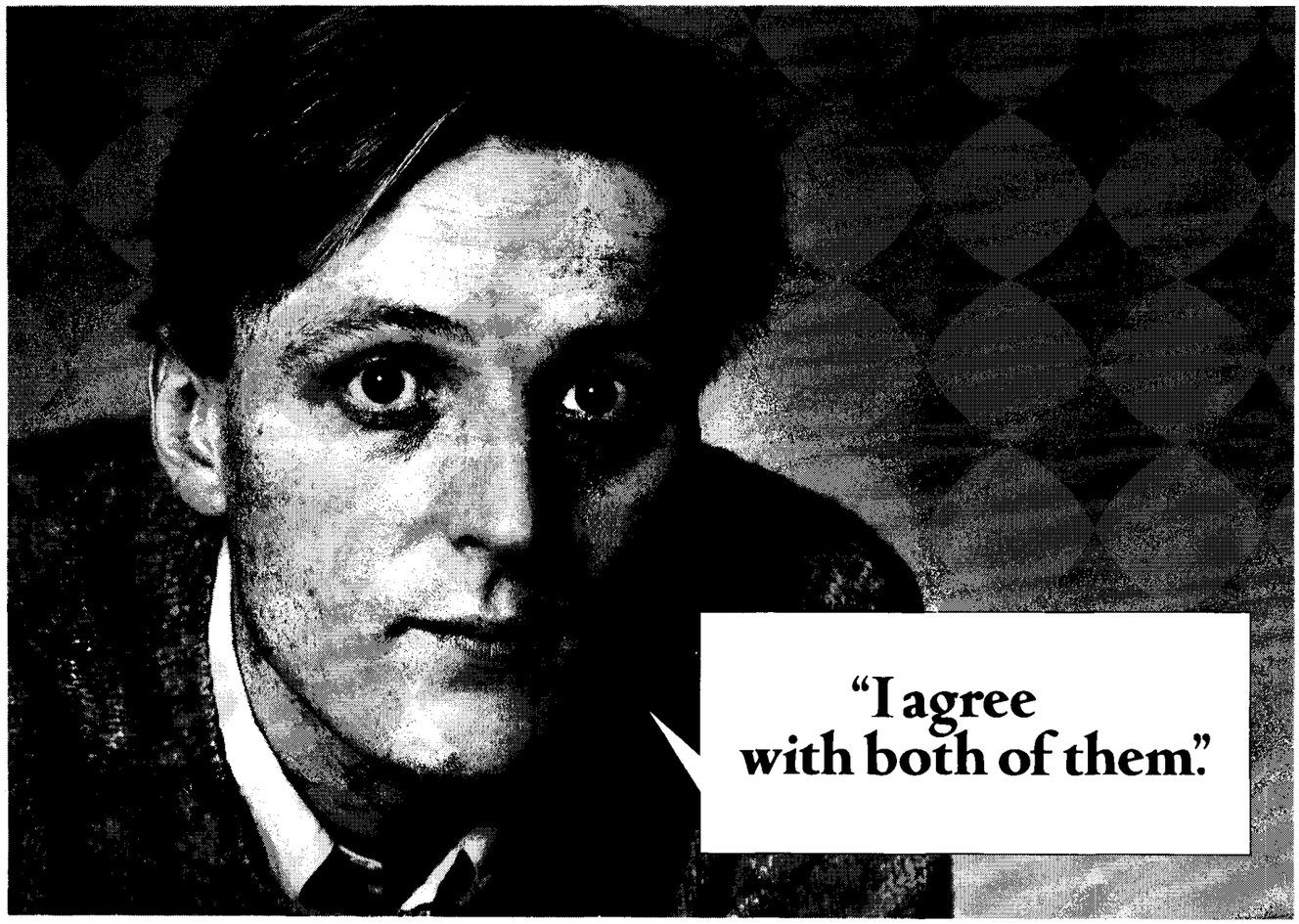

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Tom Murphy/Catholic Pictorial

Male order: police stand behind anti-abortion protestors at a "rescue" in Liverpool

A right to abuse?

Courts may at last get tough with law-breaking by anti-abortion militants. Jane Feinmann looks at the ugly face of the "pro-life" movement

"If you think abortion is murder, then act like it is murder". So runs the uncompromising logic of the militant anti-abortion organisation, Operation Rescue. The small group equates legal abortion with the Nazi death camps and is committed to interposing bodies between the "death salesman" and their "victims". It has created huge disruption both at the abortion clinics, where members picket regularly, and in the courts where their cases are repeatedly heard.

At private clinics in Stockport, Birmingham, Liverpool and Cricklewood, activists gather in the early morning at a time when they know patients will be admitted. They carry small plastic fetuses and lurid posters which read "Mummy, please don't kill me". They chant songs and carry out "pavement counselling" in consistently unsuccessful attempts to make women turn round and keep their babies.

"Activists are known frequently to use obscene language. Staff at one clinic say a priest regularly shouts out 'Fucking murderess' as they arrive"

Last month, for the first time, 15 Rescue defendants in Stockport faced charges for conspiracy under a little used 1875 property law, in a move to secure more convictions. The case which, unusually, went on for a fortnight, is due to finish this week. It could point the way to stiffer penalties for rescuers after a period of lenient treatment from local magistrates.

The British demonstrations are an exact replica of a form protest developed very

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successfully by the US parent organisation, under the leadership of a 30-year-old "born again" hippy, Terry Randall. The former second-hand car dealer created a new style of protest when he began aggressive attempts to dissuade women from entering clinics in 1983, shortly after his conversion. "He wasn't satisfied until a patient was reduced to tears", a clinic spokesman is reported as saying. He is now a nationally known figure who has been arrested dozens of times over the past two years. The organisation has been implicated in firebombings of clinics, and harassment and assault on staff and patients. An estimated 30,000 arrests have been made at hundreds of "rescues".

A Canadian branch appears to have had far less success, neither influencing attitudes to abortion nor attracting mass support. Most of the 100 or so members of Rescue in Britain are Canadians who arrived here last summer, joining a small home-grown group led by Scottish Roman Catholic priest, Father James Morrow. He welcomed them to his base, Humanae Vitae House (named for the papal encyclical against artificial birth control) in his Braemar parish. The headquarters organises rescues and pays the legal costs of members after arrest.

At first British clinics opted to remain silent about the nuisance, believing that if ignored, it might go away. "We had the *New York Times* Paris office on the phone three times last year. Each time we said 'no comment'," says Pam Davies, sister at the South Manchester clinic in Stockport.

But the rescuers, though small in number, have proved persistent in their disruptions. Clinic staff regularly give evidence in court that Rescue demonstrators scratch, push, shout obscenities and abusive threats. Now they are calling for better protection of patients and custodial sentences for those who break the law.

Margaret Withington, a sister at the Calthorpe clinic in Birmingham, has brought charges of assault against named demonstrators. She says she was pushed to the ground when she tried to help patients get into the building. "It was a horrendous experience. Unless you have been there, you cannot imagine how terrible it is. I am very angry that people, most of them from abroad, are allowed to cause such disturbances and then walk free from court."

Rescue activists are also known frequently to use obscene language. Staff at one clinic say a priest regularly shouts out: "Fucking murderess" to women as they arrive. Pam Davies says that one man persistently shouts at her phrases such as: "Have you done your killing today?"; "Your home is dripping with blood"; and "You feed your children with the blood of dead babies".

Proving that named demonstrators have been causing public disorder is not easy, particularly in magistrates courts where previous offences are not taken into consideration. And the organisation has been repeatedly and passionately condemned by members of mainstream anti-abortion groups such as Life and SPUC. Anti-abortion MPs such as Anne Winterton and Ann Widdecombe have, when asked, distanced themselves from the law-breaking. But only a handful of prison sentences have been handed out for contempt of court, and none for offences themselves. The defendants are adept at imposing their own construction on the events under scrutiny. They call clinic staff "murderers" and clinics "slaughter houses" so often that magistrates let it pass. "It is as though we are on trial", says Pam Davies.

Most defendants also express horror at the idea of violence. Barry Norman, an ex-policeman from Canada who works as a volunteer at Humanae Vitae House, told *NSS*, "No-one who is rescuing is ever violent. Nor do they use violent words." Norman claims that birth control pioneers Marie Stopes and Margaret Sanger were the British and American "champions of the death movement". He maintains that "rescuing is an act of penitence", a view reinforced by the group's handful of "respectable" supporters. "Anyone who says there is violence at these protests is lying," claims Elizabeth Anscombe, emeritus professor of philosophy at Cambridge. She is a Catholic who has always opposed abortion, and has been carried away by police from at least one demonstration.

Now police and court officers are growing concerned that what one called "a major issue for the 1990s" is being ducked. South Manchester crown prosecutor Stewart Bale finds it irritating that magistrates allow defendants out on bail without even requiring that they stay away from the clinic. The tougher penalties that may emerge from the current Stockport hearing could act as a deterrent to the rescuers—or they may, as in the US, encourage more martyrs for the cause.

Law

A case to answer

James Morton asks if a murderer can become a lawyer

This week the Law Society is being urged to reopen the case of a 30 year-old West Indian who has been refused permission to enrol as a student because he has a conviction for murder when a teenager. Writing in the *Financial Times*, columnist Justinian has suggested Master of the Rolls, Lord Donaldson, step in and "reverse the Law Society's incorrect decision". Roger Smith, director of the influential Legal Action Group, is referring the case to his executive council for consideration.

The controversy has arisen over the decision taken at the Law Society council meeting in December, at the end of a busy pre-Christmas session. The unnamed applicant was not present, nor were the press or non-council members of the society. The man—described as being of middle-class parents—had been convicted when aged 17 of murder following a stabbing incident at a disco he ran in south London. He had himself been attacked and seriously injured on a previous occasion. After his release from prison he attended university and obtained a law degree.

He and his highly favourable referees were vetted by a sub-committee, who presented his case with what one member described as "impassioned argument". After debate, the vote went 31-11 against the applicant with the sub-committee, said to be distressed with the way the debate progressed, abstaining from voting. The full complement of council members is over 70, and at one time it was feared there would not be sufficient to muster a quorum.

The Law Society is at pains to maintain that there was no racial element in the debate. But one argument advanced appears to have been that a would-be solicitor should not have been running a south London disco anyway. Another was that to admit such a person to the profession would provide fodder for the Bar and the judiciary in the struggle over the Court and Legal Services Bill's plans for solicitors' rights of audience.

"Now that much of the Law Society council's debate has become public it should offer to reconsider the application on the grounds that so many of its members were absent from the final vote. That would allow it to rediscuss the issue without any reference to alleged racial and intra-professional issues which appear to have clouded its original debate. It might encourage a more humane decision," says Roger Smith.

This conflict comes at a time when the Law Society is under pressure because of a percieved lack of commitment in recruiting members of ethnic minorities. At present only around 2 per cent of the 50,000 solicitors holding practising certificates are from ethnic minorities. Positions for trainee solicitors may be available, but rarely are ethnic minority members recruited to major City firms.

"One argument advanced was that a would-be solicitor should not have run a south London disco anyway"

The Society defends its position: "We have a minority careers officer whose specific brief is to recruit to the profession. We have a race relations committee which has sent out guidelines on equal opportunities and we are in discussion with the City of London Law Society about general recruitment practices in the City" said a spokesperson. Nevertheless ethnic minorities, particularly the Afro-Caribbean community, are significantly under-represented in the large City firms. "We want people who will be comfortable with us and with whom we will be comfortable," said the recruiting partner of one major firm, enunciating a widely held if unspoken policy. For the moment, at any rate, those likely to be deemed comfortable are almost exclusively white.

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Criminal justice

Manhattan transfer

Jolyon Jenkins tells a New York story of penal reform

There was once a famous criminological paper with the depressing title "Nothing Works". The phrase sums up both its contents and the orthodoxy among penal reformers: there is nothing much anyone can do to stop criminals being criminals. Nacro, which used to be the "National Association for the Care and Rehabilitation of Offenders", even changed "Rehabilitation" to "Resettlement" in recognition of the fact.

So if nothing works, why not try nothing? This is very largely Nacro's argument — and it now forms the core of the government's own strategy on prisons. Its white paper on the criminal justice system, published next week, will make the point that, for the vast majority of offenders, prison serves no positive function.

Unfortunately, no one seems to have told David Waddington, the new Home Secretary. With fewer people in prison, he said in a recent speech, "there is a chance to take new initiatives. More useful regimes can be developed, and prisoners trained for their return to the outside world."

But if Waddington is serious about rehabilitating rehabilitation he ought to be aware of the scale of the task he confronts. In many prisons, overcrowding has put paid to any hope of training and education: it is at the bottom of anyone's list of priorities. The prison population has fallen 3 - 4 per cent from its peak, and the atmosphere in prisons, according to some reports, is starting to improve. But a prison's welfare establishment is calculated according to its "Certified Normal Accommodation," rather than the number of prisoners actually in it. So Leeds prison, which holds double its CNA, would have to lose half its inmates, and then some more, before any extra resources became available.

Outside prisons, the prospects for rehabilitation are not much better. The probation service, the only rehabilitative element of the system at the moment, feels itself under threat. According to Martin Davies of East Anglia University, who has carried out a major study of the service for the Home Office, probation officers tend to use "social work methods, using empathy, warmth and persuasiveness that pull the officer into a middle ground between agency and client." But the dominant theme of the government's "Punishment in the Community" project is *punishment*, and the probation service has been told that it must become more involved in supervision and control.

The assumption that rehabilitative = soft, and punitive = hard, is worth challenging, to judge by the apparent success of a rehabilitative programme in the United States. The Manhattan Court Employment Project is an attempt to divert people from custody, far bolder than anything that exists in this country. Each year it takes around 800 people between the ages of 14 and 25 who have been convicted of criminal offences, and puts them through a six month intensive programme of daily supervision, counselling, employment training and formal education. Thus far it is similar to British day centres, but there are important differences. The US clients have been convicted of more serious crimes than their UK counterparts, including, for example, armed robbery; the maximum time someone can spend in a UK day centre is only 60 days; and most startling of all, the majority of the Manhattan counsellors are themselves former prisoners.

After the first six months, the clients go onto a loosely-monitored probation scheme. If they re-offend during that time they can be taken back to court and have the original prison sentence re-imposed.

The central aim, says Christopher Stone, who is in overall charge of the project, is to get the clients jobs in the "primary labour market"—that is, jobs with some kind of career ladder, not the unskilled service sector jobs which proliferate in America.

When the Project started in the early 1970s, it was an alternative not just to custody, but to prosecution. But research showed that most such "pre-trial diversion projects" were used to dispose of evidentially weak cases: people were put on the scheme when prosecutors knew they were unlikely to get a conviction.

The use of former prisoners is crucial, says Stone. "We're not hiring university-trained social workers, who have a professional motivation for what they do. We are hiring people who actually empathise with the participants much more closely, but also aren't willing to take as much bull from them. They've gone through the process itself, so they understand the cost of failure and the need to succeed."

Does it work? "The chaos in these people's lives is overwhelming," says Stone. "They haven't succeeded in attending school regularly, let alone holding a job. You can make a series of gains over a period of several months, but the idea that this will transform the problems that they face when they go home every night is over-optimistic. We look for lasting changes, even if they are re-arrested and re-incarcerated during or after the programme. The rehabilitation aim is serious, in some ways more serious than a measurement of re-arrest rates would indicate."

As it happens, recidivism rates are significantly lower than those for a matched group of people who go to jail. "But if you believe that jail is actually destructive and increases future criminal behaviour, then the reality is probably that doing nothing would produce a lower recidivism rate than jail," says Stone.

In Britain, such a scheme would probably falter because of judges' reluctance to impose non-custodial sentences for serious crimes. The Home Office accepts, that judges and magistrates mostly use non-custodial sentences as alternatives *to each other*. The Manhattan project will only accept people when it is convinced that they would otherwise go to prison. Judges don't have an automatic right to impose it as a sentence. "We put a lot of stress on this very largely because of the British experience of alternatives to custody," says Stone.

Here, the government wants to encourage judges and magistrates to use non-custodial sentences by beefing up their punitive element. Stone doesn't think this is necessary. "What judges dislike most is being made to look foolish by releasing someone who then goes and commits another crime. What they like about these programmes is that if someone is failing to comply with the programme, we take that seriously enough to bring them back to court, and not wait for them to get re-arrested." Not many British probation officers would be willing to be so heavy-handed.

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Adult learning

Words' worth

Illiterate, or oppressed? Mike Neary reads the signs

If you can identity the marks and symbols on this page, if their form, shape and order have some sort of meaning for you, if they express a reality that corresponds to yours, then you are one of the lucky ones. You can read.

In 1990, UNESCO's International Literacy Year, official figures still suggest that over 10 per cent of Britain's population have some problems with reading and writing. In a recent Mori poll, 44 per cent of adults could not understand a simple fire notice, and 26 per cent had difficulty in filling a form correctly. A survey among Youth Training Scheme trainees indicated that 17 per cent have difficulty with literacy. These figures sound incredibly high. To those involved, they represent the tip of the iceberg.

Illiteracy as an urgent national problem was first highlighted by pressure groups 15 years ago. One of the most prominent, the Adult Literacy and Basic Skills Unit (ALBSU), has its roots in that campaign. With a grant of £3 million from the Department of Education and the Welsh Office, ALBSU sponsors literacy development projects such as work-based schemes, basic skills for parents and the support of further education colleges. Its 70 open learning centres use computer technology to create relevant and accessible learning programmes.

Alan Wells, ALBSU's director, says that although a lot has been achieved, it is difficult to quantify the work ALBSU is doing. "What is for certain is that it is a long term problem which is not responsive to a quick fix. If all the young people who left school tomorrow had good literacy skills, there would still be a lot of people who would need literacy training."

Other literacy workers emphasise the complexity of the concept. Val Hudson, a senior lecturer at an inner-city college, maintains that illiteracy is often tied up with other obstacles. These include isolation as a result of racial discrimination, having to communicate in a second language, or problems with health, finance, housing or unemployment. "Very often", she says, "what is diagnosed as a literacy problem is more a question of a lack of self-confidence and personal esteem, a lack of a sense of community involvement, or simply of not having someone around to listen."

Others feel that the way in which they are encouraged to deal with the "literacy problem" has diluted the issue. Idealistic notions of empowerment have given way to more functional ideas: supplying people with a series of "skills", in what amounts to blaming the victim. Caroline Ayerst, a basic education worker, feels that "this erodes the critical edge of basic education and turns it into a passive process."

Robert Bennett, a literacy tutor and organiser of the CAVE Literacy Club in south London, puts much of the blame for low literacy standards on schooling: "Let's face it," he says, "the education system needs its failures in order to claim its successes." He also makes the point that, "despite the fact that many people do not have sophisticated literacy skills, they survive and contribute to the economy and society, holding down responsible jobs."

This is evident from the people who make use of the club. Rob is an ex-model and dancer, and a regular user. He feels strongly about his school experience: "I was deprived. The more I study now the more it hurts: the more I realise what I could have had. Telling someone you're no good, then years later finding out you are, it hurts. I feel vindictive."

Michael, a nursing assistant who attends the project when his shifts allow, expresses a sense of deep frustration with his lack of literacy skills: "I feel on the edge, outside, like my brain is full of nothing. The little I learnt at school has terminated itself. I've forgotten the past 'cos it didn't do me any good."

Illiteracy can be seen as another manifestation of the "outsideness" of certain groups, as the outcome of inappropriate teaching techniques, as a device to pacify a resistant workforce, or the result of a lack of resources. Clearly there is a lot more to literacy than simply the question of reading and writing.

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Welfare Watch

Final payments

Tony Lynes on the benefit that carries a death sentence

A year ago, social security minister Nicholas Scott promised to make attendance allowance available to terminally ill people without the normal six months' waiting period. Clause 1 of the social security bill, which a Commons standing committee started debating yesterday, fulfils that pledge.

In some ways it is unexpectedly liberal. Anyone terminally ill would qualify for attendance allowance, from the date of claim, at the higher rate normally reserved for those needing both day and night care. But there are problems. "Terminally ill", for this purpose, means that a person can reasonably be expected to die of a progressive disease, such as cancer or Aids, within six months. There is no precedent for such a condition in social security, or any other legislation.

Its effects are unpredictable, but doctors' estimates of life expectancy tend to be optimistic. A doctor whose patient could, with luck, survive for several years will be reluctant to advise that death is likely within six months. By not doing so, however, he may deny the patient the possibility of home care. He may also face the resentment of the patients' family if his optimism, which may have cost them £1,000 or more in lost allowance, proves ill-founded.

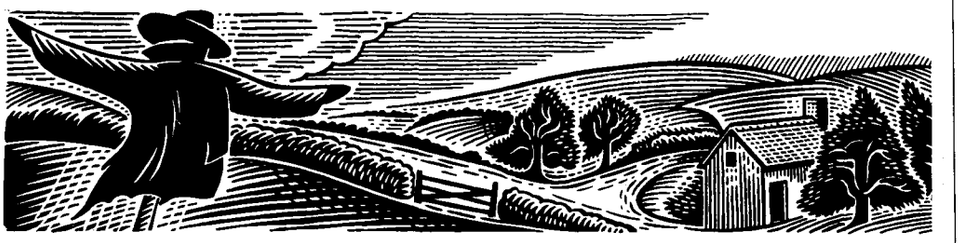
Attendance allowance normally has to be claimed by the patient, not by the carer, but the government proposes that anyone should be allowed to claim for a terminally ill person, even without his or her knowledge. Again, there is no precedent for such legalised deception. The intention is humane, but it could misfire. Most people may be totally ignorant of the benefit rules, but a minority will get the message when they are awarded an allowance they have not claimed without the normal delay.

Such problems are inevitable if entitlement is to depend on the expectation of death. The obvious solution is to get rid of the six-month waiting period for all claimants. Short-term sickness could be excluded by paying the allowance only where the need for attendance was likely to be prolonged. But this would still mean relying on the doctor's crystal ball.

Alternatively, the waiting period could be reduced. The government already intends to reduce it to three months in 1992. Why not two months or even one? Cost would be the main objection, but it is also true that the terminally ill stand to gain more from clause 1, which exempts them entirely from the waiting period.

In short, clause 1 deserves a cautious welcome. A serious debate, in parliament and elsewhere, should follow on how the attendance needs of the terminally ill might be met without offering them a fixed contract of life.

FRINGE BENEFITS



Colin Ward monitors the Swiss debate on arms

Everyone knows that there are more guns in American homes than in all the armies of the US, the USSR and NATO, and that the gun lobby can't be defeated because the second amendment to the Constitution says: "A well-regulated militia being necessary to the security of a free state, the right of the people to bear arms shall not be infringed."

We blame the US murder rate on those 200 million weapons. But we also know that Switzerland, with its very low murder rate, has weapons in every home. Every male between the ages of 20 and 50 *must* keep a rifle and ammunition in the downstairs cupboard. As Machiavelli explained, "The Swiss have no army. They *are* an army."

There are attractions about this. History tells us everywhere of the dreadful dangers posed by an élite army separate from the citizens. Look at Latin America or Africa today. It's a live issue in the current debate in Spain about conscription. "Who are we defending?" ask the ill-trained 18-year-olds. "Us", reply the socialist politicians, looking nervously over their shoulders at the phalanx of right-wing generals.

In the big powers, the sinister alliance of service chiefs and defence contractors has ensured a permanent war economy with ever more sophisticated and expensive weaponry, and consequently the professionals to use it.

This puts neutral Switzerland out on an antiquated limb. As Jonathan Steinberg says, in his absorbing answer to the question *Why Switzerland?*, "The modern Swiss army still has a vestigial atmosphere which goes back to the unruly crowd of armed, free peasants who slaughtered the flower of Burgundian chivalry by flailing at them with five-foot pikes." But "to attack the army is to assail the very identity and self-image of the Swiss people."

There's an ugly side. Not only are military and civilian life intolerably linked so that big businessmen are officers while small traders are privates, but there exists a macho gun culture and what Steinberg mildly calls Alpine bellicosity and ponderous camaraderie. Above all, there is the unwillingness to admit the rights of the political, moral or religious objector.

Constitutional changes are made by popular vote on the "initiative", needing 100,000 signatures, and the "referendum", needing 50,000. The first requires a majority of both citizens and cantons, the second a simple majority. In 1973, an attempt to win an amnesty for imprisoned conscientious objectors failed. In 1984, a very moderate initiative calling for a community service alternative to the army was defeated.

The dramatist Max Frisch is one of his country's gadflies and has written three times about the army in a mood changing from idealism to deep disillusion. In 1940 he wrote *Blätter aus dem Brotsack* (Knapsack Papers), about the experience of being a soldier maintaining a neutral haven while surrounded by Nazi expansionism. But, in 1974, came *Dienstbüchlein* (Service Record), a book which brought him intense dislike from fellow-citizens as it recorded unmentionable truths. Other soldiers, he recalled, couldn't understand what a clever chap like him was doing in the ranks. "From the workers' point of view, officers were genuinely educated or at least well off, hence entitled to lead troops and sleep in beds." Worse than that, he dared to mention that Switzerland had made some unpleasant compromises with the Nazi regime and that some officers openly sympathised with Hitler.

Last year, Frisch brought out another little book, *Schweiz ohne Armee?* (Switzerland without an Army?). It takes the form of an unwilling dialogue between the old man and his grandson, who wants to know whether he should jeopardise his civil career by remaining a corporal, or whether he should play along with mythology and seek promotion.

His oblique little book sold 60,000 copies in a few months and is now in its fifth printing. My Swiss friends complain that Frisch didn't push the argument far enough. In November the Swiss voted again, on the radical proposal to abolish the army. The measure was, of course, defeated. But my Swiss friends are jubilant, first because more than 36 per cent of citizens voted Yes, and secondly because 68 per cent recorded a vote. This is seen as a high turn-out. The issue was at last on the national agenda.

Swiss radicals have always complained that their political system ensures that nothing ever changes. On the other hand, they point out that such a referendum would be unthinkable in Britain, and that even if it were, far fewer of Her Majesty's loyal citizens would ever conceive of life without an army. They also gently remind me that a central government elected by a minority which proceeded to sell public assets, dictate what schools should teach, abolish those local authorities it disliked, and change the revenue basis for all the rest, would be totally inconceivable in Swizerland. Their complacent armed citizens would start rattling their rifles.

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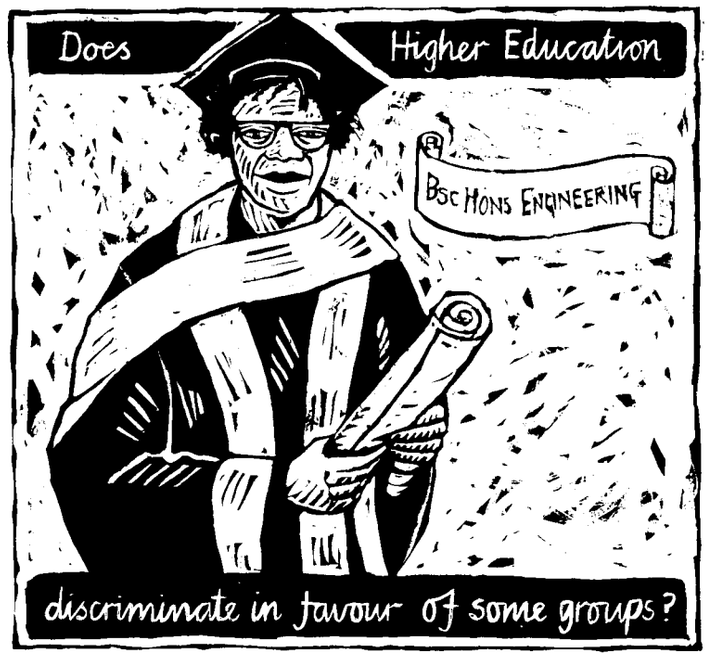
Society Today is *NSS*'s term-time page for sociology students

Student prints

Pat McNeill breaks down students by age, sex, class and race



Judy Stevens

The UCCA/PCAS circus is in full swing again. Students who have applied for places in higher education through UCCA (Universities' Central Council on Admissions) and/or PCAS (Polytechnics' Central Admissions System) are going to interviews, receiving their conditional offers or rejections, choosing which to take up or turn down, and maybe wondering whether they will have to use the Clearing House.

The only certainty is that more students will be admitted to higher education this year than ever before. At the start of this century British universities were elite institutions catering for only 20,000 students from a population of about 40 million people. Expansion to the present total of some 600,000 full-time students in all HE institutions, plus another 360,000 part-timers (including the Open University) was not, however, a smooth progression.

One period of growth ran from the 1900s to the 1930s and another was in the immediate post-war years, but the greatest growth took place in the 1960s and early 1970s following the 1963 Robbins Report. Two contrasting but comlementary rationales have underpinned this expansion. One view emphasises the need to invest in the education and training of the young if Britain is to compete successfully in world markets. The other stresses the importance of educational opportunity as a measure of social justice.

This approach regards education as an instrument of social policy, through which privilege can be undermined in favour of a social hierarchy based on meritocratic principles. In a meritocracy, occupation and thus position in the hierarchy would be allocated according to individual achievement rather than by ascribed criteria such as class, ethnicity, age or gender. How successful has higher education been in this respect? Does it discriminate in favour of some groups and against others?

Data about class of origin is available for university applicants and entrants because the UCCA form includes a question asking for the occupation of the applicant's parent, whereas the PCAS form does not. The UCCA Report on 1988 admissions, combined with data from OPCS, produces the results in the table. These proportions, in relation to the whole population, have not changed significantly for at least 40 years. The advantage of the middle-class applicant is not gained through the admission procedures: when candidates with similar A level grades are compared, class bias disappears.

For part-time higher education, the pattern of middle-class advantage has been reversed for working-class applicants born since 1945. For them, the part-time route has been a real alternative route to the higher-level occupations.

The published data do provide a very full picture of subject choices in relation to gender. In 1988 45.3 per cent of UCCA applications came from women, who obtained 43.2 per cent of the places. Both figures show a continuing increase on previous years. In choice of subject, women dominate those allied to medicine, particularly nutrition and nursing. Above average numbers of women also enter courses on mass communication, languages, creative arts and education. By contrast, men dominate entry to physical and mathematical sciences, architecture, building and planning, and, above all, engineering, where women have only 12 per cent of the places.

Statistics on the ethnic origins of HE students are patchy. The Swann Report (1985) found that in the six local education authorities studied, 2 per cent of people from Afro-Caribbean backgrounds had degrees, 9 per cent of those from Asian backgrounds, and 9 per cent of those from all other backgrounds. Such broad figures do not, however, make allowances for the age structures of the different ethnic groups, nor do they identify the country in which the individual was educated.

A question on ethnic origin was not included in the UCCA and PCAS forms until two years ago. From this, it will be possible to see whether the proportion of applicants from any minority matches the proportion in the appropriate age-group.

Older applicants to HE have been the real success story of recent years. The Open University now offers the greatest opportunities, with about 150,000 students enrolled. Nearly 25 per cent of PCAS admissions in 1988 were of people over 21, including 6.2 per cent over 30. Most of these were women. For UCCA, 11.5 per cent of accepted home candidates were over 21, of whom about half were over 25.

Some school-leaver candidates, then, may have a better chance of entry to HE if they take a few years out in employment. It's worth thinking about.

Discussion topic:

What is the proper role of higher education in an industrial society?

Social class	% of applicants	% of acceptances	% of whole population (1981)
RG 1	18.6	21.0	5
RG 2	47.7	48.1	25
RG 3(N)	11.8	11.0	14
RG 3(M)	13.6	12.5	32
RG 4	7.0	6.3	17
RG 5	1.3	1.1	6

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This island race

Ian Wright, the black footballer, cries when he pulls on a white England shirt. Do his feelings challenge the convictions of both the anti-racists and the new right that blacks are alien to England and its history?

Paul Gilroy looks into such matters, claiming that the black story is the story of England.

This is an excerpt from a lecture he gave in connection with the Hayward exhibition, "The Other Story".

The politics of race has changed. The idea of a narrow anti-racism, for example, is no longer tenable. The situation has not come about because racism is less pernicious or because the long-term goal of racial justice is any less worthy. This change is not even a result of the political ineptitude of anti-racist work in local authorities. It is the issue of culture, and the failure of anti-racist practice to deal effectively with the cultural dimensions of racial politics in this country that confirms its redundancy.

Anti-racism could not theorise the

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relationship between "race" and culture because these two ideas were not effectively distinguished and anti-racists colluded with their new right opponents by reducing the former to the latter. At the same time, ideas of race and nation became ever more closely associated in the new popular, patriotic brew. And since anti-racists themselves relied on ethnic absolutes it was hard for them to deny coherently the legitimacy of ethnic absolutism when it appeared in the Honeyford brand of reasoned British nativism.

In this climate, to be both black and British was thought to be an impossibly compound identity. To be British is, in any case, to contract into a category of administrative convenience rather than an ethnic identity. The term English, which is often mistakenly substituted for it, acts as a partial and manifestly inadequate cultural counterpart.

The disjuncture between the two terms is a continual reminder not just of English dominance over Scots, Welsh and Irish people but also that a British state can exist comfortably without the benefit of a unified British culture. The idea of an authentic cultural content of our national life is therefore constructed through an appeal to Englishness rather than Britishness. It is around this concept that the difficult tasks of creating a more pluralistic sense of national identity and a new conception of national culture revolve.

These problems have a special significance for the artists of Britain's emergent black vernacular. They echo through musician Jazzy B's boast that he is proud to be both black and English and even resound when Ian Wright, the national B team striker, confides to the *Daily Star* that he weeps as pulls on his white England shirt. There is, however, no more striking example of the manner in which these vital conflicts are resolved by blacks in this country than painter Sonia Boyce's ironic refiguration of herself in the guise of an English Rose. All these actions are part of a wider cultural struggle to affiliate with England and in so doing, to change what it means to be English.

The desire to make art out of being both black and English has became a major issue in the black art movement and should be seen as part of the long, micro-political task of recoding the cultural core of national life. In this light, the fissures, stress cracks and structural fatigue in the edifices of Englishness become more interesting and acquire their own beauty. With ethnic absolutism left behind, the tasks of demolition and reconstruction may also provide an opportunity to create a division of political labour in which white radicals can share.

The burgeoning musical distinctiveness of black England has provided the easiest means to explore this process of cultural exchange and transformation. However, during the 1980s the movement of black artists encompassed a variety of other expressive forms. The exhibition at the Hayward Gallery until (4 February), in which Sonia Boyce's picture is featured, has provided an overdue occasion to reflect on the development of black visual arts, the distinct place they occupy in the art establishment and their importance for black communities.

Sonia Boyce's ironic refiguration of herself in the guise of an English Rose. "She Ain't Holding Them Up, She's Holding On (Some English Rose"), 1986

Black artists are now in a position to attempt a more ambitious project than simply filling in the spaces that racism has left blank in the history of art. They are already working to recompose understanding of English culture and their creativity needs to be complemented by a rereading of that culture's history which places the idea of "race" at the centre rather than the margin. The visual arts will play a key role in this not just because of the tremendous vitality of the black fine art during the past decade but because architecture, aesthetics and art have recently re-emerged as politically significant issues. As the principal public means to mark out and signify the cultural limits of national life, they will have a direct bearing on what the cultural order of a new Europe will be.

An editorial in a recent issue of the journal *Modern Painters*, which pleaded for Prince Charles to extend his well-known ideas about architecture into a discussion of art, offered an important insight into this. Though sometimes cited as evidence of his eccentricity, Charles's interest in his black subjects-to-be is well recognised. These views should not, however, distract us from the less wholesome ways in which some of his supporters would link the relationship between what is national and what is natural in a political discourse that offers the black English very little.

The newer, culturally focused varieties of racism I have described, make no appeal whatsoever to biology but they view the nation as a *natural* unit formed spontaneously from the association of families. The national frontier around authentic English culture marks the boundaries of the national community as naturally and as finally as the white cliffs of Dover.

The *Modern Painters* editorial identified the things "for which the Prince has so eloquently argued" as "the replenishment of traditional skills, a renewed sense of the spiritual dimensions of aesthetic life" and imaginative involvement with the natural landscape. These great themes were given a narrowly national currency and linked to "the historic achievements of the British School". There are plenty of clues here that we are dealing with a notion of national culture that is as homogeneous as it is ethnically undifferentiated. It becomes necessary to ask whether the aesthetic that underlies these suggestions would view blacks as a natural and acceptable presence in the English landscape it reveres.

The black presence in cities is novel and symptomatic of their postwar decline but it is somehow appropriate. Contemporary racism has identified black settlers with the cities in which most of them live and their cultural distinctiveness with its urban setting. Black life discovered amidst urban chaos and squalor has contributed new images of dangerousness and hedonism to the anti-urbanism of much English cultural commentary. How much less congruent is a black presence with the natural landscapes within which historically authentic English sensibility has been formed?

Here, the issue of black settlement needs to be separated from consideration of how blacks have been pictured in England's own imagination. The imagery of race has a much longer lineage in English cultural life than the aura of postwar novelty allows us to see. The theme of racial difference has also been extensively addressed from within that tradition. It should not be surprising that the relationship between the forces of nature and the human processes that culminate in racial exploitation has been explored before. It can even be found in what *Modern Painters* would probably regard as the exalted point in the artistic inventory of English national culture represented by John Ruskin and his first mentor J M W Turner.

Turner's famous tragic picture *Slavers Throwing Overboard the Dead and Dying—Typhoon coming on* (also known as *The Slave Ship*) draws these strands together. The picture deploys the imagery of wrathful nature and of dying slaves as powerful means to highlight the degenerate and irrational nature of English civil society as it entered the 1840s. This work can provide a small illustration both of the extent to which race has been tacitly erased from discussion of English culture and how a racial theme, relocated at the heart of national self-understanding can contribute to a new more pluralistic conceptualisation of both England and Britain.

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Turner and Ruskin, who owned *The Slave Ship* for 28 years, currently enjoy special status in contemporary cultural life. Turner is a leading player in the unfolding drama of our national heritage while Ruskin's social thought was an important inspiration in the development of new left thinking about English intellectual history. More recently, his aesthetic ideas have supplied the raw material for precisely the ambiguous, organicist conception of English culture celebrated in the reborn *Modern Painters* and its royalist editorial. Turner's picture was first publicly shown in London in 1840, a few weeks before the World Anti-slavery Convention met in the Strand's Exeter Hall. The artist's apparent alignment with the abolitionist cause has been queried by some commentators, but the lines which accompanied the painting illuminate his elemental despair for which the morality of the traffic in slaves offered a striking and appropriate symbol... "hope hope fallacious hope where is thy market now?"

Ruskin, given Turner's "The Slave Ship" as a present, seemed unable to integrate aesthetic comment with acknowledgement of racial content

The picture was not well received, opinion being divided as to whether it was absurd rather than sublime. The *Times* ridiculed it and drew attention to "the leg of a negro, which is about to afford a nibble to a John Dory, a pair of soles and a shoal of whitebait". Writing in *Fraser's Magazine*, Thackeray was not slow to query the use to which the images of the trade had been put: "The slaver throwing its cargo overboard is the most tremendous piece of colour that ever was seen.... The sun glares down upon a horrible sea of emerald and purple, into which chocolate coloured slaves are plunged.... horrid spreading polypi, like huge, slimy, poached eggs, in which hapless niggers, plunge and disappear. Ye gods what a middle passage!"

We are dealing with a notion of national culture as homogeneous as it is ethnically undifferentiated

Ruskin's father gave him the picture in January 1844 as a new year's present to celebrate the publication of the first volume of the original *Modern Painters*. An entry in his diary a couple of days before the painting was delivered conveys his excitement and something of his early responses to the picture. "Suspense about *Slaver*. My heart is all on eyes of fish now—it knew something of other kind of eyes once, and of slavery too, in its way. Its slavery now is colder, like being bound to the dead, as in old Spanish cruelty." These private acknowledgements of the metaphysical potency of the painting's theme contrast quite sharply with the famous description of the painting he had penned previously for *Modern Painters*.

Here, Ruskin's evaluation of the painting forms part of his discussion of how water should be painted. He praised Turner's picture because it includes "the noblest sea that Turner has ever painted" which is also "the noblest certainly ever painted by man". He continues: "If I were reduced to rest Turner's immortality upon any single work, I should choose this." The celebrated passage is too long to be quoted here but it is significant that Ruskin relegates the information that "the guilty ship girded with condemnation" is a slaver to an extraordinary footnote: "She is a slaver, throwing her slaves overboard. The near sea is encumbered with corpses."

It seems legitimate to draw attention to Ruskin's inability to integrate his aesthetic commentary on the painting with open acknowledgement of its "racial" content. Why was the "racial" theme which contributes directly to the conspicuous power of the work given no aesthetic significance of its own?

Three years after his notorious involvement in the campaign to defend Governor Eyre's brutal handling of the Morant Bay rebellion in Jamaica, Ruskin put the painting up for sale at Christie's. It is said that he had begun to find the subject matter of his father's gift too painful to live with. No buyer was found at that time and he eventually sold the picture to an American three years later. The painting has remained in the US ever since and is now exhibited at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston. Its exile also raises significant questions for the cultural historian as to the apparently un-English nature of its content.

It would be simplistic, even absurd, to characterise any of the complex exchanges around Turner's extraordinary painting as racist in the modern sense of the term. It is exciting to discover how the imagery of race and slavery appears centrally in Victorian debates over what England had been and what it was to become.

The painting offers one opportunity to appreciate that English art and aesthetics are not simply in place alongside English thinking about race. Thinking about England is being conducted through the "racial" symbolism that artistic images of black suffering provide. These images were not an alien or unnatural presence that had somehow intruded into English life from the outside. They were an integral means by which England was able to make sense of itself and its destiny.

The picture and its strange history pose a challenge to the black English today. It demands that we strive to integrate the different dimensions of our hybrid cultural heritage more effectively. In doing this, we may discover that our story is not the other story, as the Hayward show argues, but the story of England in the modern world. The main danger we face in embarking on this difficult course is that these divergent political and aesthetic commentaries will remain the exclusive property of two mutually opposed definitions of cultural nationalism: one black, one white. Each has its own mystical sense of the relationship between blood, soil and seawater. Neither of them offers anything constructive for the future. ●

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Chris Wadden

In multitudinous dialects

COLLECTED POEMS
Derek Walcott
Faber £8.99

John Lucas

In "A Letter from Brooklyn", a poem written some time after he had left the island of his birth, St Lucia, Derek Walcott tells of an old woman who writes to him about his parents and of how "The strength of one frail hand in a dim room/ Somewhere in Brooklyn, patient and assured,/ Restores my sacred duty to the Word." As these lines show, Walcott's word is spoken in accents learned from English masters, and from the beginning he learned his lessons well. In 1948 his home town was destroyed by fire. The 18-year-old poet recorded the event in a sonnet, "City's Death by Fire". It ends:

In town, leaves were paper, but the hills were
a flock of faiths;
To a boy who walked all day, each leaf was a
green breath
Rebuilding a love I thought was dead as nails,
Blessing the death and the baptism by fire.

When one recalls how poets at that time seemed to fall helplessly for the declamatory cadences and verbal tricks of Dylan Thomas, Walcott's ability to *use* Thomas feels truly astonishing.

Yet the poem raises a crucial question. What exactly are those "flocks of faiths"? Walcott breathes a commitment to the island of St Lucia and, beyond that, to his West Indian heritage. But it is a complicated heritage, as the "Word" of "A Letter from Brooklyn" makes plain. Unlike other contemporary West Indian poets, Walcott makes very little use of patois or demotic, although when he does, as in "The Spoiler's Return", he manages it so well as to make you long for more.

Perhaps this is why he *doesn't* write such poems more often: they come too easily, can seem like parody and thus demeaning of their subject. Still, who'd be without this kind of thing from "The Spoiler's Return":

Down there, that Hot Boy have a stereo
where, whole day, he does blast my caiso;
I beg him two weeks' leave and he send me
back up, not as no bedbug or no flea,
but in this limeskin hat and floccy suit,
to sing what I did always sing: the truth.

Spoiler's truth is a painful one, spoken in anger and bitter jest. It's about the graft and corruption of West Indian politics and about feelings of powerlessness, too.

More usually, though, Walcott speaks for his "Origins" (the title of an early poem) in accents he has—literally—cultivated. Among the masters to whom he has been to school are Eliot, Auden, Lowell, Hart Crane, Stevens. What results is not, however, pastiche, but an extraordinarily rich, implicated language and rhetorical largesse, which seem endlessly capable of creating "The Word" of Walcott's imagination. "A Far Cry From Africa" begins:

A wind is ruffling the tawny pelt
of Africa. Kikuyu, quick as flies
Batten upon the bloodstreams of the veldt.
Corpses are scattered through a paradise.
Only the worm, colonel of carrion, cries:
"Waste no compassion on these separate
dead!"
Statistics justify and scholars seize
The salients of colonial policy.

This then leads to the agonised, "I who have cursed/The drunken officer of British rule, how choose/Between this Africa and the English tongue I love?" As the brilliantly punning title shows, however, Walcott is able to choose both without betraying either.

Nevertheless, "this Africa" gradually recedes in importance as Walcott's career develops. In his book-length and often magnificent autobiographical poem, "Another Life", it repeatedly breaks through. But other concerns emerge, centred on the idea of the poet as emigré. Of course, this is itself complicated by bloodties: on the other hand, the very fact of being a poet and of having gone to the United States and then become a world traveller provides material for poetry. Walcott is a very fine poet-as-traveller (in a way that Auden, for

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example, wasn't.

Considering how much time he spent in the States it's remarkable, to say the least, how rarely Auden has anything to say about it, how little he observes it). Walcott both observes and absorbs. In "Homage to Edward Thomas" he remarks that "topography delineates its verses" and if this alerts us to his unrivalled accounts of Caribbean land—and, still more, sea-scapes ("When the oil green sea glows but doesn't catch/... the water chuckles/and the ribbed boats sleep like children/buoyed on their creases"), it also acts as a pointer to those many successful poems where Walcott is a far from world-besotted traveller.

Yet this said, I have to add that recent poems suggest this is precisely what he may be settling into. Or, if that seems too negative an account of his development, it is true that Walcott is in danger of cutting adrift from the various cross-currents on which "The Word" most securely rode. At all events, I am certain that his two finest volumes are *The Star-Apple Kingdom* (1979) and *Midsummer* (1984). In them Walcott's language is at its most receptive. Thus *Midsummer* contains the miraculous "The Season of Phantasmal Peace", a vision of how

> all the nations of birds lifted together
> the huge net of the shadows of this earth
> in multitudinous dialects, twittering tongues,
> stitching and crossing it.

The poem ends with the revelation that "this season lasted one moment, like the pause/ between dusk and darkness, between fury and peace,/but, for such as our earth is now,/it lasted long." But that came out in 1984 and 1984 has been outlasted as much, perhaps, by the empowering of multitudinous dialects as by anything else. "The Season of Phantasmal Peace" is a good poem to take into the 1990s.

Threnody for marriage

THE OTHER SIDE
Mary Gordon
Bloomsbury £13.99

Mary Flanagan

The Other Side is a family saga raised several octaves. Here are the failed marriages, the hypocrisy, the old pretence and the evolving hatred. But Mary Gordon's treatment of these themes is unique. The story moves in and out of focus on members of the MacNamara family: the parents, gentle, decent Vincent and high-principled but irascible Ellen, who emigrated from Ireland to America (the "other side") in the early part of the century; their daughters and grandchildren—particularly the cousins Cam and Dan—and their great grandchildren. The author shows a profound understanding of the deadly dynamics of Irish Catholic families, but her book moves beyond ethnocentricity to consider the more universal horror of genetic entrapment.

There are no stereotypes, no jokes, no stage Irishmen. The characters are complex and disturbingly real. The novel doesn't stride the years, epic-fashion, but concentrates the action in a single day. Vincent has recovered from a broken leg (inflicted by Ellen in a bizarre opening scene) and is coming home to his wife who stubbornly awaits him while dying an ugly death. The MacNamaras gather in the house which has sheltered and repressed them for decades to greet Vincent and bid farewell to their matriarch.

A sense of simultaniety is achieved by linking past with present and interweaving the characters' histories and reflections, the hidden resentments they are unable to express, as though under a spell. Flashback replaces chronology, psychology is stressed above event, though never to the detriment of pacing. Analysis nearly replaces plot, yet it draws the reader on in the manner of more conventional domestic narratives.

Mary Gordon's writing has a gravity which is often mythic in tone. "Her mother is a house she would bring down," thinks the malign Theresa. And indeed there are references throughout to the House of Atreus, as though hinting at a modern Celtic Oresteia. She has a capacity for revealing the tragic in ordinary people, awarding them stature even in their petty vindictiveness. The doom-laden atmosphere, the unity of time and place, the clash of generations and the unmasking of ancient lies are reminiscent of O'Neill's *Long Day's Journey Into Night.*

She has a lilting even rhapsodic style, punctuated with a stacatto of unattached phrases and clauses that links the contemporary with the past, and is especially appropriate in the Irish sections. The story of Ellen's mother and of Vincent's work on the building of the New York subway are marvellous. Her treatment of the couple is almost valedictory, a threnody for a kind of marriage that may never be again.

The account of family role-playing is also excellent. Dan "wonders if it would be possible to live a life where he didn't feel an obligation to lie all the time." Vincent tears himself from the rest home where he has been happy to keep his promise to the wife he no longer wishes to see. Even the liberated Cam is in suffocating bondage to her parasitical mother. None of them can tell each other the truth or say what it is they really want, the implication being that families, in fact all close relationships, force us to deny our true selves. And the MacNamara's plight is compounded by Catholic guilt.

The question is whether we can ever break free of the things that tie us up in knots: religion, family, social conditioning. Mary Gordon's answer seems to be a qualified No. There is the love between Vincent and Ellen, of course, but can such love exist in present circumstances? Even in our ostensible freedom the old chains bind us, no less strong for being invisible. We cannot bring ourselves to release our captors, which is a depressing thought. Yet *The Other Side* is rendered with such high art that the conclusion is more cathartic than sad.

Paradoxes of a holy fool

SIMONE WEIL: UTOPIAN PESSIMIST
David McLellan
Macmillan £25

Katherine Gallagher

Heroic, multi-faceted and visionary, Simone Weil spent most of the last eight months of her life attached to the Free French in London, battling with her despair about the war, continual headaches and other illnesses, and writing *The Need for Roots*, one of her major works. At the same time, she was trying, unsuccessfully, to be accepted on a Resistance mission back into France and to persuade the authorities to set up a front-line shock-troops squad of nurses. De Gaulle, hearing about the latter, declared, "Mais elle est folle."

Weil, a "utopian pessimist" as McLellan aptly calls her, was used to such dismissiveness. Further, she was well aware that her "holy-fool" lifestyle often distracted people from paying attention to her ideas and from asking, "Is what she says true?" Nevertheless, as she wrote to her parents a month before her death from T B and malnutrition (anorexia?) in August 1943, she felt "there is within me a deposit of pure gold which must be handed out..."

Her friend and biographer Simone Pétrement's description of her at age 16 as a new student at Lycée Henri IV marks her as already being "different"—an image reinforced throughout McLellan's excellent authoritatively-written book:

"Her charm remained hidden from most people, who saw in Simone only a totally intellectual being... She wore clothes with a masculine cut, always the same outfit (a kind of suit with a very wide skirt and a long, narrow jacket), and always flat-heeled shoes. She never put on a hat, which at this time in the upper middle class was very unusual. All this made for a singular personality that evoked the image of the revolutionary intelligentsia and that, for this or some other reason, had the power to irritate many people, sometimes to the point of fury..."

Professor McLellan's biography, perhaps the most comprehensive and exploratory book yet written about Weil, makes for compelling reading. Drawing on previous books and some unpublished material, it is especially valuable for two chapters analysing her major political works, *Oppression and Liberty* (completed in 1934) and *The Need for Roots* (1943) within the context of her life. The book is further enhanced by photographs, a brief bibliography, notes, indexes, maps of Weil's Paris and France, and a chronology pinpointing her life.

McLellan's background as a political theorist and Marxist scholar gives him special insights into Weil's challenging criticisms of Marxist ideology. "It is not religion but revolution which is the opium of the people", she declared.

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Further, her investigations into working life led her to the conclusion that industrialisation was dehumanising and that it was force rather than class that was the key to history.

McLellan faithfully and sympathetically examines Weil's thought with a balance and luminosity that the educator in her would have approved. In recounting her life, McLellan omits some of the anecdotal detail to be found, for instance, in Pétrement's biography, but nevertheless the writing is always clear and engaging. Importantly, this book's political direction builds on that of other recent more politically-oriented books such as Miles' *Simone Weil: An Anthology* and McFarland and Van Ness's *Formative Writings*.

Weil saw her life and thought as one. Both were continually interlocked, and her penetrating, lucid gaze on issues and events constantly offers a fresh perspective. McLellan notes that there have been few lives which involve as much paradox as did Simone Weil's: "born into a comfortable bourgeois family, she became a fanatical supporter of the proletariat; a pacifist, she fought in the Spanish Civil War; a Jew, attracted to Christianity, she refused to join the Church because of its adherence to the Old Testament; she wrote a lot—and beautifully—about love, but abhorred all physical contact with her fellows; her outlook on life and politics was sombre, even pessimistic, yet she was ever ready to propagate utopian schemes for the reformation of society; finally, she abjured her splendid gifts by refusing existence itself and her death was caused, at least partially, by self-starvation."

Perhaps her life can be best understood through her "outsiderness" coupled with the fact that she considered it a misfortune to have been born a woman, determining to ignore this as far as possible within the context of her life. This refusal of her gender is surely central to understanding her life (and anorexia, if it was that). McLellan doesn't dwell on the gender question—Weil herself didn't either. Nevertheless he rightly points out how many discussions of Weil, by concentrating "on the peculiarities of her life and particularly of her psyche..(have) tended to obscure her thought ...facile judgements of her character have often led to equally facile judgements of her work..."

In her keenness to live life to the full, to close the gap between thought and action, she tried an incredible range of activities—as student, teacher, political-activist, trade-unionist, factory-worker, writer, philosopher, farm labourer, freedom-fighter, poet and mystic—sometimes combining several roles at once, despite illness and the demands of her writing.

At the time of her death, she had published only a few articles but today her *oeuvre* comprises nearly twenty books and innumerable articles. She is a great spiritual thinker, constantly inspirational, with work drawing on a breathtaking spread of knowledge. Most significantly, she is never afraid to take the long view of events, however discomforting.

Professor McLellan's magnificently lucid book is a welcome step towards making Simone Weil more widely known and appreciated.

When grandad woke up he was dead disapponted, he says: "I put me new gansey and me new tie on and I looked like I've come out of Burton's window, and nobody took me photo!"

Tanya Young with Grandad, from "Step by Step", a book of photographs by Sirkka—Liisa Konttinen, published by Bloodaxe Books

Reproductive wrongs

RECONSTRUCTING BABYLON: ESSAYS ON WOMEN AND TECHNOLOGY
H Patricia Hynes (Editor)
Earthscan Publications £8.95

Rose Shapiro

Apparently the word for political rule by physicians is pharmacracy. When writer Gena Corea talks about reproductive technologies she calls the physicians, embroyologists and others involved "pharmacrats". Hardly a term to inspire trust, so it's no surprise to discover she believes these white men in white coats are in pursuit of malevolent social control—"controlling women, controlling child production, controlling human evolution."

Gena Corea, like fellow writer Janice Raymond whose work also appears in this book, is a founder member of FINRRAGE (Feminist International Network of Resistance Against Reproductive and Genetic Engineering), a group with activists around the world but few members in Britain. They are also Associate Directors of the Massachusetts Institute on Women and Technology, and this is its first published collection of work.

The Institute's major purpose is described by editor H Patricia Hynes in exclusively negative terms: "to analyse how technologies objectify, physically harm or marginalise women", and it is this kind of commitment to the catastrophic on which the collection is based. Four authors have written 13 essays, which look at environmental toxins, biotechnology in agriculture, family planning programmes in Lesotho and Nepal, reproductive technology and a final positive account of a low-tech community health clinic in a South African township.

Corea and Raymond see reproductive technology as the principal example of technology's current threat to women. Reproductive technologists, they argue, hide behind a seemingly compassionate promise of help for the infertile, but in reality their aims are far more sinister. "Infertility is the opening wedge for quality control in the production of babies, in other words, for eugenic control", says Corea.

She envisages a future in which the use of reproductive technologies will be made compulsory for all women by the pharmacrats. A class of "breeder women" will emerge out of existing surrogacy agencies. Other women will be told that their own eggs are sub-standard, and be made to carry donor eggs which have been screened for genetic defects. Always keen on the overstatement, Corea suggests that she herself would be rejected as a fit reproducer because she had asthma as a child.

This "B" movie scenario allows no room for real world discussion or debate, and certainly

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no credible critique of what is happening at the moment. In vitro fertilisation programmes are freuently expensive, emotionally and physically wearing and carry little chance of success. But this anthology provides no comfort for the infertile. The message is clear—the dangers of abuse of this technology are so great that it must not be used at all. It is beyond reform, and all women should refuse to use it. In any case fulfilment through motherhood is a myth, as Patricia Hynes conveniently reminds us later, the implication being that this denial of the chance to have a child should not be seen as any loss. (Hynes's nasty name for those involved in reproductive technology is "technodocs").

Since the demand is for a ban on all reproductive technologies, and not for regulation in the interests of women, all sorts of difficult questions—like whether Corea and Raymond accept the principle of pregnant women themselves choosing to have an abortion in cases of foetal abnormality—need not arise. And because all reproductive technologies are dismissed, nowhere do the writers describe or assert the right of lesbian and single women to artificial insemination or any other reproductive technology, a right which may soon be swept aside in this country through parliamentary bargaining over embryo research legislation.

It is this philosophical and political cul de sac which makes the collection so limited and frustrating, and in such contrast to the authors' supposed belief in "the need for a scientific policy in which women's dignity and autonomy are central considerations". They are locked in a doctrinaire position which invalidates the needs and desires of any woman who disagrees with them. I think I'll call them femogogues.

In the land of Oz

THE SLOPES OF LEBANON
Amos Oz
Chatto & Windus £13.95)

Stephen Howe

Amos Oz's reputation in Britain is artificially inflated. Not in the sense of his being overrated as a writer: he is quite as good as most reviewers keep saying he is. Rather, his status in *Guardian* readers' eyes as *the* Israeli novelist, *the* voice of intellectual and artistic dissent, owes more to the rapidity, frequency and market location of his translation into English than to his position among Israel's writers.

The Slopes of Lebanon is a collection of Oz's newspaper articles and political speeches from the past eight years. They include a compelling series of meditations on Lanzmann's *Shoah*. Most, though, circle round what both Israelis and Palestinians now call simply "the situation". Their essentially humane, conciliatory message will command, and deserves, wide international notice. But they're also likely to perpetuate muddle about Oz's position in Israel. He is not a lonely eminence among novelists there. Grossman and Yehoshua, for instance, are as important and as compelling; many others almost as popular—but then, the country where all of Jeffrey Archer's books are available in Hebrew sends as gloomy a message about popular taste, or media puffing, as does any.

More important, Oz's political stance is hardly a unique one. It falls somewhere on the lefthand side—though not very far left, for his nationalism is as strong as his humanitarianism—of a political spectrum both wide and crowded. To see him as a lonely voice in a wilderness of bigotry gives the Israeli government too much credit, Israeli society too little, and Oz himself the wrong kind. At a time when the most crucial aspect of hopes for peace is the battle for Israeli public opinion, that misperception matters desperately.

Still odder than this, we get to hear very few Oz-like voices from Palestinian writers. There are indeed—as apologists for Israeli policy so insistently point out—fewer of them. Palestinian society and literary culture, in exile and under occupation, are less pluralistic than Israel's.

Palestinian writers face greater barriers of censorship, throughout the Arab world at least as much as in Israel, than do Israeli ones. But there's also a wider linguistic gulf to bridge, both literally and metaphorically. Israeli peaceniks almost always speak "our" language, that of the Enlightenment as well as English. Far fewer Palestinian doves have learnt either. Thus Edward Said appears at least as misleadingly isolated a figure on his side as does an Oz on his.

Most of the pieces collected here take their importance from an attempt to interpret, to mediate, not between Israelis and Palestinians—there are no real Arab individuals here, just enemies and victims—nor between Israel and Europe, but between ideological camps within Israel. Unlike many intellectuals of the Israeli left, he neither despises nor reacts with uncomprehending horror to the religious fundamentalists and their secular, militaristic allies. He tries to reason with them, even (sometimes too much?) on their own ground: the Messianic legacy, the true meaning of Zionism, the existential fears of the Arab as Ishmael. The attempt breaks down, must as Oz insists be broken off on principle, with those who will not call murder—whether of an Arab child or a Jewish busdriver—by its proper name.

The Slopes of Lebanon is a direct sequel or companion to *In the Land of Israel*. There, the argument was expressed through personality, poetry, myth, landscape, the smell of El Al cigarettes and the taste of mint tea. Here it is both more monochrome and more nakedly polemical. Here the idea of an Israel at peace and of justice, is sketched as abstract vision. There, it is evoked through an old man on a seafront bench, a former refugee from Hitler with some bad memories but now content, who would happily have and still could have an old Palestinian neighbour, also with his memories but also enjoying the sunshine, to *kvetch* with. *Slopes* is intriguing, patchily powerful, but *In the Land* is still the essential political Oz.

Legacies

LOYALTIES
Carl Bernstein
Macmillan £14.95

Jenny Diski

Loyalties is an apt title for a book that struggles to reconcile the private emotions of a family having a bad time with the ideological intricacies of the Cold War period in the US that culminated in McCarthyism. It is subtitled A Son's Memoir: the family having a bad time is Watergate journalist Carl Bernstein's own.

Al and Sylvia Bernstein were progressives, and, briefly, members of the Communist Party. The distinction is paramount in their minds, but was not so to the government or to their son.

Bernstein's historical investigation into the origins of McCarthyism is suffused with his childhood rage at the insecurity created by his parents' principles. He describes his confused feelings about his mother; an eerie mixture of the terror that any child experience about a parent, and something else: "I missed her a lot when I was little, even when she was there, because I was terrified I'd lose her. My sense of her has always been distorted by fear that people were trying to take her away: fathers, sisters, grandparents, police, FBI men, members of Congress."

The memoir, though tough and unsentimental, is filled with distress. The childhood anger is transformed in adulthood into a battle between father and son about the writing of the book itself. Al Bernstein remains adamant that it should not be written, not just because he and his wife have finally achieved a private, orderly existence, but because Carl cannot understand the principles involved.

The problem, for Carl, is the denial of Communism. Were they members? His father refuses to say. But if they were, why did they take the Fifth? Why, when the jobs were being lost and the lives ruined anyway, didn't they take a stand and say, "Yes, I was/am a CP member, and so what?" And why the reluctance still?

The Party was never the point, according to Al and Sylvia Bernstein. They believed and worked for trade union recognition and civil rights. If the organisations they were members of were fronts for the Communist Party, which many were, it was the front they were interested in. It was the work that counted. But the terror of the witch hunt remains: "If you're going to write a book that says McCarthy was right, that a lot of us were Communists, you're going to write a dangerous book. You're falling into a trap... because we were bad guys according to McCarthy's standards. And those were the standards then and they prevail now."

Bernstein's childhood was conditioned by the times. Atheistical Jewishness and the Left were inextricably linked in the school he attended, the Cooperative Jewish Children's School, under surveillance by the FBI, where the "Jew-

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ish" holidays observed were "Passover (but not Yom Kippur), May Day, Paris Commune Day, July Fourth and the anniversary of the Russian Revolution—October Division." Less entertainingly, he waited ouside the White House with the silent thousands on the day of the Rosenbergs' execution, but he had already noted how much Ethel resembled his mother, and that they had a son his own age. The night they died in the electric chair he became hysterical with his own imagined losses.

He reacted with a mixture of respectability and waywardness; demanding a Bar Mitzvah; sporting an "I like Ike" badge during the election; persecuting an antisemitic old lady, and losing extensively at illicit poker games.

Parents and son never quite achieve a common vision of the time, but the book allows them to talk to each other about the hurt they feel. And a new understanding is reached as Carl Bernstein traces the origins of McCarthyism back to the Loyalty Order issued by Truman in 1947. Al Bernstein places the blame for what was to come squarely on Truman. Long before HUAC did its worst, the Loyalty Boards dismissed thousands of government employees for "association" with what were deemed subversive organisations. Carl Bernstein remembers the stream of desperate and frightened people who came to his house to have his father defend them. And in the written record of his father's defence of liberty, Berstein discovers a pride and respect that seem to outweigh the legacy of confusion.

Briliant Jeremiad

IRELAND 1912-1985 POLITICS AND SOCIETY
J J Lees
Cambridge University Press

Owen Dudley Edwards

G K Chesterton, reviewing J L and Barbara Hammond's *The Village Labourer*, began by saying some books were too good to review. Professor Joseph Lee's *Ireland* is such a book. Also, Professor Lee accords such Swiftian hilarious ferocity to Irish self-congratulation that an Irish reviewer is left uneasily wondering whether he is not surrendering to it in hailing this as one of the great books of our time.

But calling to his aid the dismal pedantry of British-descended Irish academic reviewing (with uneasy thoughts of the book's grim smiles at *that*), this critic notes that Tom Clarke, insurgent inspirer of the 1916 Rising, and born on the Isle of Wight, is called an Ulsterman; that Lee habitually talks about "England" whether or not he means "Britain"; that pp. 177-78 have a dittograph; that James Dillon, later to lead Fine Gael, is twice credited with having returned to it before he had; that Deputy Jack MacQuillan abstained in 1951 rather than, as stated, voting for de Valera's return to power; that Cambridge University Press have, perhaps deliberately, forgotten how to spell the name of Oxford University Chancellor Harold Macmillan; that the Secretary of the Irish Department of Education in the 1960s was Terry Rafferty not Raftery; and that the author is so fond of saying that "It remained to be seen" what or how so-and-so would do that a foreign republication might—for many other reasons as well—entitle itself *Remains To Be Seen.*

Purpose of the Foregoing Exercise (as Flann O'Brien would say): To prove subtly that the reviewer has read the book. Now to prove he has been enthralled by it.

If Gibbon, Macauley and Henry Adams had been imprisoned for the last 15 years in Lee's native Kerry or in his workplace at University College Cork (whose history departments are intellectually among the most exciting in these islands), with daily tutorials from George Bernard Shaw, magisterial supervision from Jonathan Swift, and flying visits from a large procession of twentieth-century European scholars, they just might have produced something as good as this.

Gibbonian scepticism and enlightenment are here, but underpinned by hard fact; Macaulian exuberant argument with the reader is here, but with the excision of any gospel of progress; Adamsian irony is here, but in the open with no retreat into patrician security. This is "revisionist" history, certainly, but without the value-free caution sometimes charged against modern Irish historians. Lee is a "revisionist" in the more accurate sense of the term, pointedly expressing himself as the production of his own

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times and in lucid prose telling his story and anatomising its participants.

English (sic) reception of works critical of independent Ireland sometimes has a subtext of invisible self-congratulation. There is little for its comfort here. Lee does not belabour the point, but his real case aginst Irish errors since independence could be summed up in the word "post-colonial". The mistake of the Irish after 1922 was not in being insufficiently English; they remained far too English, still desperately trying to impress what they were imagining themselves to defy. Ireland failed, as Britain has failed, in not thinking in sufficiently European terms.

The book is brilliantly comparative in examining Irish performance against Finnish, Norwegian, Danish, Swedish, Austrian, Swiss, Welsh and occasionally even Balkan yard sticks.

But his view is from Kerry and Cork—not without some affectionate if hard knocks in his own backyard— and he accurately deflates an accurate deflation of the pretensions of Dublin. Indeed Britain could learn much from his critique of the capital's power-centralisation, as well as from his verdict that proportional representation had served Ireland well, and that Ireland's complex if arid politics at least proved flexible enough to absorb and also to neutralise impulses which destroyed democracy elsewhere.

It is his expertise in economic history which brings in the devastating assessment. He is largely fair on Northern Ireland Protestantism, having kinder things to say about Craig and O'Neill than many modern historians, and at least giving Brookeborough and Paisley a good deal of what Robert Emmet would call the charity of his silence. But it's not a work reflecting a sense of absorption in the plain Protestants of Ulster such as can be found, say, in the plays of Frank MacGuinness. Dublin recognises common ground (usually exaggerating its extent) as it looks at Unionist Belfast; Cork sees the stranger.

Let me succumb (to what Lee would call the delicious temptation) to say his brilliant Jeremiad nevertheless proves once again that Ireland is a fascinating country since it has given birth to such a fascinating book.

Rattling tin cans

DOES AID WORK IN INDIA?
Michael Lipton and John Toye
Routledge £35

Prabhu Guptara

Growing up in an Indian city where one was always confronted by beggars, my parents gave me a strict rule about how to behave towards them: never give any money to individuals, always give food; give money, but only in a way that will make a long-term difference. That is a rule which I still find helpful in responding to the new class of mentally and physically able beggars created in the last few years in Britain.

It is interesting to learn from Lipton and Toye that in other areas, too, Indian experience may have something to teach the rest of the world. These areas apparently include aid management, agriculture research, rural credit, sectoral policies, and poverty-oriented schemes.

Does Aid Work in India? is not about the sort of aid which reaches "developing" countries as a result of the cans rattled each year on behalf of a thousand charities, especially in the season of goodwill. The book is about development assistance which is offered by governments, bilaterally and multilaterally.

How much aid of that sort has India had? The figures are easy to quote, their significance less easy to describe: 11.6 per cent of global aid to low-income countries came to India, and she is the third largest recipient of aid in the world. But that needs to be seen in the context of the following facts. India has nearly a third of the total population of such countries, and the aid, typically in 1985, formed only 0.7 per cent of GNP. Not surprisingly, aid has had a much smaller impact on India than on most other such countries—the average proportion of aid to GNP (in low-income countries other than India and China) is 7.8 per cent.

Still, India has had aid for some thirty years now, and the amount of aid has not been negligible (more than £7 billion, at current values, by the mid-eighties). For a variety of reasons—historical, demographic, political and geographic—the country has had an enormous amount of attention from scholars interested in questions of development.

Though Lipton and Toye naturally lean on earlier studies, their work is the most comprehensive and up to date now available. On their central question (does aid work in India?) they argue that the answer really depends on what sort of "work" it is that that aid was intended to perform. For donors' viewpoints, much aid is even now meant to serve political or commercial ends. Presumably, it serves those ends tolerably well, or it would not be continued. From the official Indian viewpoint, aid must be thought to work, or India would not ask for more of it. Lipton and Toye concur, arguing that aid has played a significant—though not crucial—factor in Inda's economic development.

India is now the world's seventh or eighth industrial power, a member of the space and nuclear clubs, with more technically trained people than any other country in the world except the Soviet Union and the United States, and has spawned a growing number of multinational businesses. What did aid do for these achievements? It probably helped relax foreign exchange constraints on the economy, almost certainly raised India's ratio of total savings to GNP, and affected the level of investment positively; food aid in particular helped maintain both working capacity and mass demand for non-food products. Given the right sorts of policies and pressures, it is possible that aid can help other countries along the path of development. Certainly, Lipton and Toye are clear that turning to commercial funding, as India has done, can only be of minor and short-term assistance—and that it carries substantial risk.

That sort of broad economic answer, however, does not relate to the question in which most readers are interested. The question is: did that enormous amount of aid to India, over thirty years, help alleviate the country's poverty? The question ranks high in Lipton and Toye's minds, and they devote the whole of their second chapter to it. Their answer is that most official development aid to India was never intended to alleviate poverty in the first place, and that in any case the total amount of aid has been tiny when compared to the needs involved. The best that they can do is that "beyond reasonable doubt, Indian poverty would have been much worse" without aid.

Perhaps so. But the fact is that the absolute number of Indians below the official poverty line has risen sharply in the last thirty years—and the official poverty line in India is harshly and brutally basic, anyway.

Since governmental aid—bilateral or multilateral—has to go through the Government of India, the aid has to fit into the priorities of the Government. Those priorities have never really focused on the removal of poverty, because tangling with the structure of Indian poverty involves undermining the ruling Hindu ideology. This is a point I did not appreciate till I read *Truth and Social Reform* (recently published in Britain by Hodder), a book written out of nearly ten years of work by the grassroots social worker, Vishal Mangalwadi.

Moreover, a concerted attack on poverty would undoubtedly need to involve attacking the power base of most Indian political parties, which are almost entirely dependent on the upper castes.

Aid bodies have never sought to apply their influence to such fundamental questions. By the very nature of their relationship with the Indian Government, they cannot do so. The real amount given in aid has declined since the late sixties and this, as Lipton and Toye point out in their careful academic way, "probably does mean declining capacity by donors to support (or influence) Indian policies against poverty".

Voluntary bodies have greater leeway in choosing the projects which they aid. However, in Britain, these bodies have to keep looking over their shoulder to see whether they may inadvertantly cross the peculiar and unclear line which, in charity law, is held to divide "alleviation of poverty" from "politics" on the one hand and "business" on the other. In most countries, poverty cannot be alleviated except through profound social change signalled by a shift in values. In effect banning the stimulating effects of right-wing economic activity as well as left-wing organisational activity, British charity law emasculates charities which have as their otherwise acceptable objective the alleviation of poverty.

You want to help alleviate poverty? Forget about governmental aid, mate. Campaign to change charity law, and keep rattling those cans.

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The ages of women

OURSELVES GROWING OLDER
Paula Brown Doress and Diana Laskin Siegal
British edition Jean Shapiro
Fontana/Collins £9.99

Angela Willans

This is a daunting book to pick up, let alone read—definitely not for flipping through in the bath or bed. It weighs close on 2lbs and is about as easy on hand and eye as the Yellow Pages.

Still, like previous works from the awesomely thorough Boston Women's Collective, it plainly wasn't written for a relaxed read. The challenging sub-title is Women Ageing With Knowledge and Power—and this fairly sums up the book's rallying, feminist flavour. Its main aim is to encourage the 35-plus sisterhood to fight the ageism and sexism of our patriarchal culture and "to free ourselves of both of these, not only in our own minds but also in the society around us." In short, it's a "pull up your socks" book, not a "take my hand" one.

But who is it for? Does it meet a need? Would I recommend it to the women in this age-group who write to my problem page about their worries? Most of these cries for help come from women who are reluctant to take their sexual and intimate health problems to medics whom they perceive as being dismissive and/or patronising.

The book is great on self-help for these. (But, oddly, there's only a passing reference to yeast infections—a problem which actually doesn't go off the map for the over-35s). They also write to me about their fears of becoming unattractive, lonely, neglected, homeless or pushed around, their changing relationship to their adult children, and does this pain, this lump mean I have cancer?

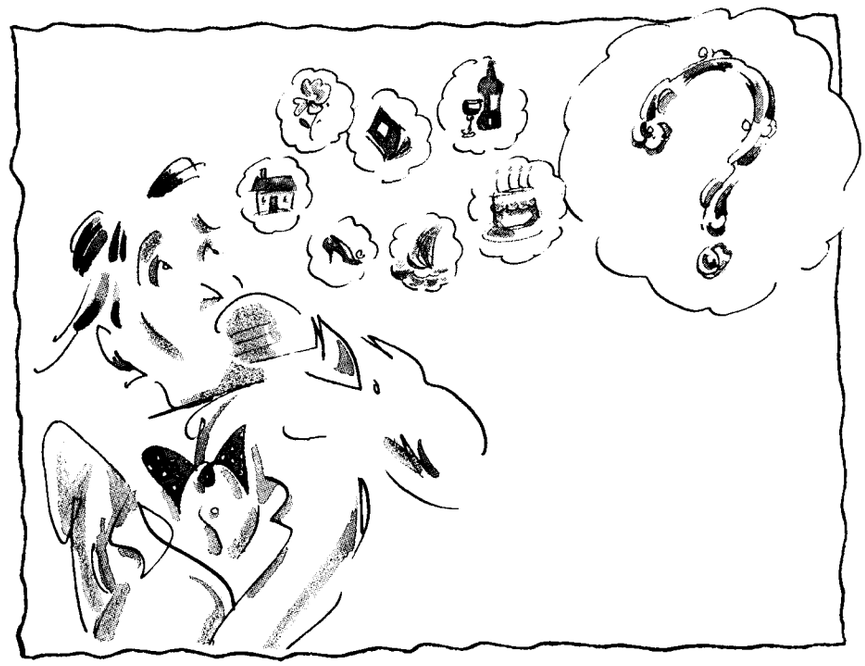
The book does deal with these topics, but mostly at repetitive length and in a curiously impersonal way—perhaps inevitable in a "collective" work. Even the quoted casebook material creaks with contrivance, as if it comes from women who've spent years in consciousness-raising groups—or reading books like this.

Perhaps we're seeing here the difference between American and British women's experience, or between the two nations' brands of feminism. Jean Shapiro's additional material is noticeably more sensitive in responding to what I perceive as women's real worries *at the level at which they're asked.*

The book also tends to state the obvious, padded out with socio-babble. For example, on the point about widening your horizons in mid-life, there's "If we've been used to forming our closest bonds with family members and others within an ethnically homogenous community, we may be more comfortable having our most intimate friendships with those of similar background. However, it can be a pleasant

Everything you always wanted to know, but were afraid to ask about

Britain 1990



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surprise at times to find a kindred spirit in a more diverse setting."

As to who needs it—at first plough through you might wonder who could do without it. In addition to coverage of general health topics and of specific complaints and operations—hysterectomy, osteoporosis, arthritis etc—there are chapters on the practical questions of housing, work and retirement, money matters, caregiving, death and dying.

However, there are numerous books available in the UK which deal separately with all these problems, most of them straightforwardly written, quietly helpful, with no axes to grind, and all of them cheaper, handier and, to my mind, more directly in touch with the real, ordinary lives of older women in this country.

What I missed most in this undeniably useful resource book was a person-centred approach to women's unique difficulties. The feminist voice, alas, is not always a feminine one—not, at least, if its accent is transatlantic.

Citizen of tomorrow

ISABELLA FORD
June Hannam
Blackwell £32.50

Sheila Rowbotham

Isabella Ford was a key figure in the transition from Liberal to Labour politics in Yorkshire. Her role in new unionism was as significant as that of the much better known Annie Besant and she did much to hold together the suffrage movement and socialism. Yet her name is known only among relatively small groups of historians, inspired by the passionate, pioneering study by E P Thompson "Homage to Tom Maguire". During the 1970's the late Gloden Dallas, whose notes are acknowledged in June Hannam's political biography, kept Isabella Ford's ideas alive in talks at labour and feminist meetings. Despite the lack of personal papers, June Hannam's study now introduces her to a wider audience.

The upbringing of Isabella and her sisters, Emily and Bessie, does not correspond to stereotypes of the Victorians. Reared in a milieu of Quaker social conscience and middle class radicalism in Adel, near Leeds, the girls were encouraged to develop enquiring minds and social commitment. Anti-slavery campaigns, suffrage, opposition to the forced searches for VD legalised by the Contagious Diseases Acts, support for working class and women's education, internationalism and anti-imperialism were part of their family heritage.

In the mid 1870s they met Edward Carpenter, teaching in the University Extension movement and fretting under upper middle class conventions. Carpenter, who was to write on socialism, feminism and homosexuality, introduced them to Walt Whitman's writings. Their cousin Edward Pease, founder of the Fabian Society, was another influence.

Never satisfied with a purely intellectual radicalism, Isabella believed, like Carpenter, that experience was the great teacher. She was swept into the militant labour unrest of the late 1880s and early 1890s in which women workers in Yorkshire played an important part. Isabella helped to organise and collected information to lobby for legislation. Policy had to be based on understanding "the actual workers' own standpoint".

Through new unionism she met socialists like Tom Maguire, poet and labour organiser, who was committed to sex equality. A visit to Colne Valley Labour Club's tea party overcame Isabella's last doubts about socialism, for the men poured the tea and washed up. In the early 1890s she joined the new Independent Labour Party, believing like Maguire, in socialism as a living force "entering into all the ways of life".

June Hannam misses the theoretical significance of this utopian socialist feminism. In contrast to the Marxist approach to "the Woman Question", Isabella Ford argued working class emancipation was impossible while women were unequal. But the biography is good on the labour suffrage alliance, showing the strains created by the Women's Social and Political Union's militancy and Isabella's opposition to Christabel Pankhurst's eventual separatism.

The ILP's tribute to her in 1924 when she died reminds us that socialism has a rich tradition. "Isabella Ford's conception of Socialism was broad and human. She identified herself with every movement for freedom. She was international through and through, she loved animals scarcely less than human beings, she loved beauty and music, and sought a society in which all men and women would have an opportunity to develop into full human beings. She was indeed a citizen of tomorrow."

Wild days

ABSENT FRIENDS
Geoffrey Wheatcroft
Hamish Hamilton £15.95

Michael Horovitz

These 22 "brief lives" range from the New York intellectual Dwight Macdonald whom Wheatcroft met only once, to two of his closest buddies. The randomness of death selected them, and though a few of the memoirs first appeared in newspapers or magazines, most of them share the special sort of seriousness and wholehearted sympathy more often apparent at funerals and memorial services. An obituary prepared in advance is always to some extent a job; once the subject has died a higher personal commitment obtains. As Wheatcroft says, "to the living we owe respect but to the dead we owe nothing but the truth. These were all people whose liking for me made me think better of myself. Those were the words used of his friendship with Orwell by A J Ayer, who died while this book was in proof."

The collection has had an unusually mixed reception thus far, with mega-sour gripes from some of Wheatcroft's most obvious journalistic peers—for being self-indulgent in general, and boasting his and his pals' happy habits of carousing from lunchtime and before to the morning after in particular. There's certainly often as much information about the author as about some of his subjects here, but that's an occupational commonplace of most portraiture, and can be a virtue as well as a vice.

Regarding Mark Boxer, Wheatcroft himself observes that "many portraitists are hacks: an exception is Lucian Freud, whom Mark in turn drew brilliantly." Wheatcroft is neither an inspired caricaturist nor a mature fine artist, but he's no mere hack either. His subjective digressions and asides are in a brash, bold, sharply clipped, and rather sub-A Huxley/G Greene *Spectator*ese that's become a bit over-prized, a bit of a cliche, during the Thatcher years. Yet I find the aspiration to honesty of these confidences refreshing, even when they're embarrassing.

Wheatcroft goes farthest over the top in his souvenirs of wild times with Michael Dempsey, a roaring boy of London publishing whose whole existence was given to going over the top. Would-be naughty nineties folk should be told that not all so-called sixties folk were as silly, or as privileged, as is suggested by the fairly typical day Dempsey "insisted on giving me a little present of hash which I put in a matchbox. I had chosen to sail from the Isle of Man to Liverpool rather than fly and then, having remembered to post some kippers to Muriel Belcher, I noticed that another boat sailed from Douglas to Dublin and decided to change my ticket and go and stay with friends for the Irish Derby at the Currah that weekend. I had forgotten where I was, and what my change of plans might suggest to the CID men who stopped me (wearing a trench coat and felt hat, like an extra in *The Shadow of a Gunman*) at the docks. I thought for several minutes that they were going to search me and cursed Michael for dropping me in it again."

Such tall tales of Boho hooray grads doubtless passed for goodly sport at El Vino's, but look arch and pseudy between expensive hard covers. However, Wheatcroft's more contemplative evocations, especially of the writers he most respected or loved (Ayer, Gareth Bennett, Hans Keller, Philip Larkin, Willi Frischauer, Shiva Naipaul, Elizabeth Smart, Sam White and Philip Hope-Wallace) are genuinely telling and poignant.

But he's wrong to think Larkin's choice of Brian Patten's compassionate, if crudely outspoken poem about a girl raped at a suburban party, to close his Oxford anthology with, reflected the old boy's "scornful irony, showing without comment what English poetry had come to." Larkin sincerely appreciated the realism and plain terms of the Liverpool poets, the qualities that have made his own verse so popular. Qualities the best of this book exudes also.

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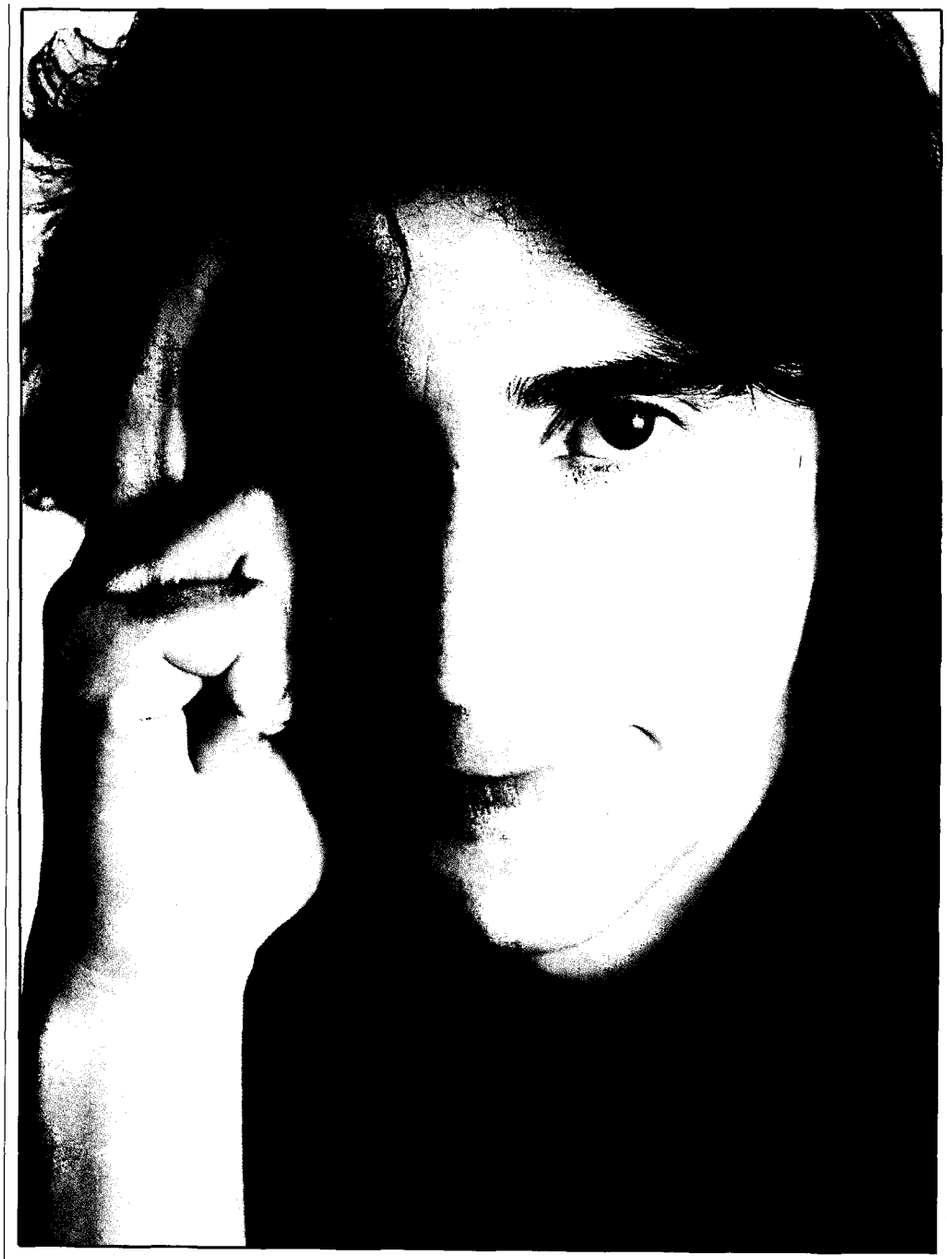
Villain of our times

Paul Morley talks to Phil Daniels about the new Orange



Kevin Davies

There's a lot on Phil Daniels' mind at the moment; he just can't keep still. He's hyped up. It's not surprising. He's been immersed in 13 weeks of preparation for the RSC's production of **A Clockwork Orange**, and there's not too many days before it opens for business. As Alex, the infamous bovver-boy stalking neurotic culture, Daniels is right there at the bruising centre of this ambitious sub-operatic Alex in Wonderland project involving music, dance, narration, full fight action: and, in a few days, his wife is expecting their first child. His eyes blaze with anticipation.

"I've got that speech where Alex is saying that 'I want a son!' And I'm fucking just about to have one! It's quite uncanny really..."

Restless and excited, but certainly not overwhelmed. He's taking all this seriously, but you've still got to have a laugh. Within seconds of leaving the grand stage after rehearsing a madcap wheelchair scene during which he uses the soles of his bare feet as the chair brake, he's seated twitching with energy in his dressing room, speed chewing a sandwich and generously answering questions.

He's enjoying the attention. It's been years since Daniels has been associated with anything as fashionable as *Orange*. Back then he was the pissed-off, passed over rascal in *Quadrophenia, Scum, Meantime*, prone to play punks and skinheads. He even made a dumb pop record, and was a face when *The Face* started up. He then rebelled against being any old rebel, and ran off to act, seriously. He hid his face. It's a face that could be just right to play the killing choir boy with a lifestyle that Anthony Burgess created.

Just lately, it's been photographed a lot, and Phil's been talking a lot, as *Orange* gets all hyper and troublesome again. Alex is back, and don't we know it. But we know Alex as a goony bowler hat, a lewd eyelash, a sickly-sweet Malcom McDowell drooling with nastiness; we see a graphic image mix of the forbidden and the familiar. Alex is famous, and so, again, is Daniels. What can he add to the obscenely attractive Alex we've come to love-hate? And can he survive Alex, or will he end up playing nazis in American mini-series?

Imaginary Alex, the pugnacious teen-devil who takes deep joy in being a cause—of discomfort, terror, grief—was thought up first in a controlled panic by Burgess, then mixed up by Stanley Kubrick with promiscuous brutality on his mind, and finished off with ordinary outrage and ragged censorship. Ever since the film and its fuss, his chronic rage has been for real. Alex has ended up unleashed as a kind of psycho-stylist with a complex passion for Beethoven, violence, clothes and livid wordy-fun (he invents the language nadstat) who ends up tamed for the sake of some broken idea of civilisation.

God help us, but he's an irresistible bastard, too far out and universal ever to date, a villain to truly measure the times. The *Orange* hype has burned harder lately, with a new set of protagonists and the regular everlasting issues and controversies. Burgess jerks indulgently in the background having delivered his script, leaving Daniels and the cast, director Ron Daniels, the RSC, designer Richard Hudson, glam-choreographer Arlene Phillips and the famous half of U2, The Edge and Bono, to squeeze something new and dramatic out of Alex's battered, battering life story. They attempt to go beyond Kubrick's underground legend of vengeance, beyond our own attachments and assumptions, and revitalise the sense of struggle we have concerning the factors that generate our need to hate, to be stimulated by hate.

Daniels isn't going to let all this get him down: the seductive mystique, the sensationalist levels of danger and perversion, the big volatile presences of such mighty *businesses* (literally) of the RSC, Burgess, U2, even Phillips; the technical and physical demands of a production that's part rock musical, part Lloyd-Webber, part performance-art, part nightmare. In the midst of a tough rehearsal, there's a lot on his mind but, he's cheerfully ripping into his sandwich, and impersonating Burgess with relish.

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"I met him for the first time the other day. I'm not going to say he's off his head, 'cos I really like him, but he's very obssessive. 'When I wrote the book,' he told me, 'what it was, and this is why I hate the glossary in the American edition, is that by the end of the book you should have a knowledge of basic Russian. Aarggh!"

Has he given you any practical clues about Alex and his desires?

"No, but I'm sure he will. He told me why he called the character Alex though—Alexander, meaning 'witness of humanity.' I don't think that will do much to how I play it..."

How has he decided to play it? He refuses to watch the film, in case he's "stained" by McDowell's Alex. "In case he's brilliant and he makes me think I'll be no fucking good." He's coming from the book, the script, and his own muddled feelings about a violent world, and our obssession with it.

"I think that everyone has an Alex in them. We all have it in us to be Alex. I think I've got to get the audience to be his accomplices. He's got to get the audience to go along on his journey, so somehow he's got to be a likeable man. You have to see that he loves things, he has a love for life. Violence is his art. I don't want to play him as a thug, someone who just loses his rag. I'm playing him as an innocent—he thinks he's playing the innocence, but he really *is* innocent. But when it comes to the violence, you have to show what he's capable of. It's difficult...you have to show the intelligence of Alex as well as the nastiness."

"So many plays I've done playing young people are scripted so badly that you are *just* a skinhead, you are *just* a punk, and it goes no deeper. As if these people come out of nowhere, mindless for no reason. Alex is not a mindless thug. He's made a choice. And you get to know him in a little more detail. It's not just fuck you I'm a punk, I'm fucking dodgy, with some vague left wingness dolloped on top. Alex is more complicated than that. Left-wingers will see this as a right-wing project, and right-wingers will see it as left-wing. I like that.

"The play asks a lot of questions. That's why it was worth doing. Years ago I thought that the book was just about violence for its own sake, but it's much more than that. It's about the play of good and evil in all of us, so it is about God. It's like the *Old Testament*, a book we all learn from, and one of the most violent. An eye for an eye and all that. Alex reads the *Old Testament* in prison, and he loves it. He makes his own notes. He translates it into nadstat, he finds comfort in it. I think that the play is theologically correct. It's all about choice. Everything must be personal choice, an individual choice between good and evil. We must have the option to be evil, this is what makes us human. If that choice is taken away from us, through religion or therapy or whatever, then our humanity is lost. But as well as all this, you have to realise that the play is funny. A very, very, very black comedy."

A very, very, very, violent black comedy, about the creation of violence, violence as spectacle, as entertainment. Is Alex our future or our past? What is he saying to us? Do we just get a kick out of his kickings? Is the play going to be like a sado-mystical, hyper-realistic *Rocky Horror Show?* I can see by the look on Daniels' face that there's a lot on his mind.

"It's different when you're dealing with something that is about complete lack of conscience or morality. Are we making an expensive entertainment, or searching for some kind of truth about our attitude to violence? Can we feel sympathy for Alex because he was just trying to fight his way out of a trap, because he was threatened by a dwindling of possibilities? Or should we feel just revulsion?"

Daniels asks the questions, and stares plaintively at me as if I'm Eric Morecombe telling him that *there's no answer to that.* Burgess's original answer to the questions of good and evil, optimism and pessimism, faith and faithlessness consisted of a last chapter that Kubrick never got to read in his American edition of the book, and which therefore never made the film. In the book, and the play, Alex just grows out of the violence. He loses interest. He changes.

"It's not properly satisfying for some people, but it can be incredibly powerful. The last speech is so strong. There's been an unbelievably punishing first 20 minutes, it absolutely knackers me. Knives, bats, chains, sword-fights, the catwoman, the rape scene. It's relentless stuff, but if the audience can stick that out and not make their minds up too early, the ending is just brilliant. I revel in that ending. You might have despaired, have been indifferent, but the ending is all about having faith. I love the end, where he grows up. You start out kicking the shit out of people, and then you grow up."

Is that all there is?

"It's something! It's not a defence or anything, it's part of the argument, it's a celebration of the importance of inner change. And I can feel that kind of change in me, a growing up, an understanding of responsibility. In that end speech, I'm trying to mix it up a bit. Who's speaking? Alex, the actor, Phil Daniels? It's sort of weird.. sure, it's Alex making the speech, but there has to be that feeling of it going beyond that. That's the thing that I like about this play. It's so difficult to put your finger on *it.*

Daniels rolls his eyes, chuckles as he gets carried away yet again, polishes off his sandwich, and decides that "it might all be a fucking nightmare". He shrugs, as if to say, then again, it might not. He goes back to the rehearsals, back to the knife fights, the mind control, the rape, the casual violence, the big music, the big sets, the big themes, the big questions, the big what's it all about, the big challenge, the big expectation, the Big Orange.

"A Clockwork Orange" will be showing at the Barbican from 6 February-13 March

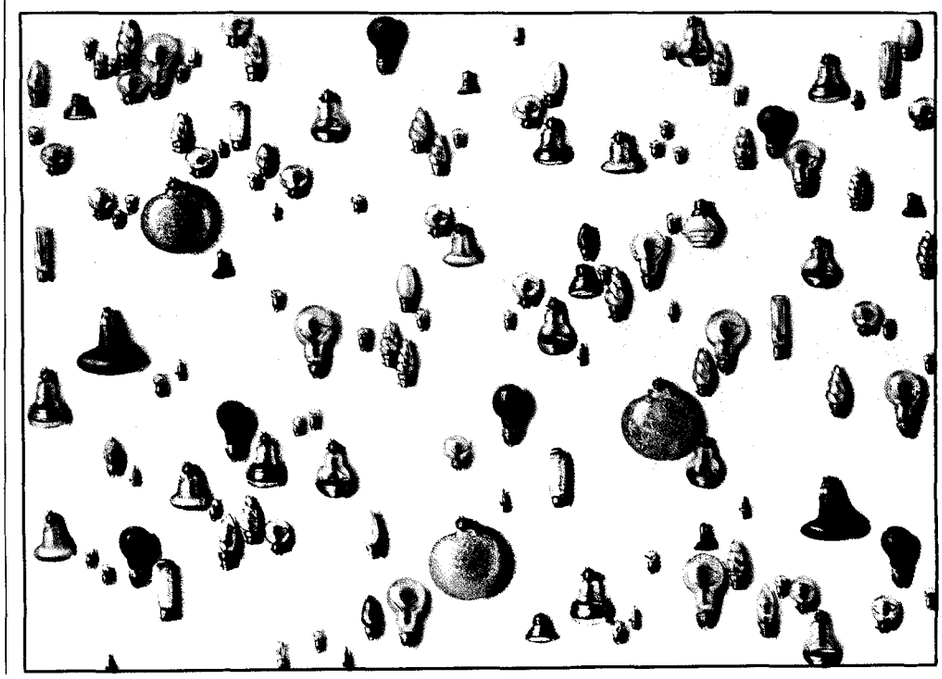
Art

Show business

David Batchelor challenges one potent image of art

American art of the fifties and sixties will, Tom Wolfe asserted, come to be remembered not for its painters—Pollock, Rothko, Newman, DeKooning and so on—but for its critics, the "Bergers of New York": Greenberg, Rosenberg, and Steinberg. It was these men, Wolfe suggested, who were the *real* art-

"Lightbulbs" go on at the British Arts Show 1990: Lisa Milroy (1989)



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ists, the people who determined the course of postwar art and *made* the paintings.

It is a seductive image, and the temptation to cobble up a Wolfe-ish picture of the state of current art has already proved irresistible to some commentators. In this picture, the shadow cast over art by the dominant figure of the critic has itself been eclipsed by the darker and more sinister shadows of the dealer, the collector, and the entrepreneur. Within this picture, the proliferation of galleries, exhibitions, magazines, competitions and prizes which has been observable over the past decade is read as no more than the hollow symptoms of an ever expanding, novelty-craving market. Accordingly, a significant structural change is seen to have occurred: where once a patient and well-mannered market responded to shifts and changes in art, now the market directs the changes and orders up the art it desires.

This picture can be endlessly embellished with tales of dealers and collectors waving five-figure sums at young students in exchange for their entire output of work. And there is clearly some truth to these rumours: there is a vast amount of money around at the moment—even if it remains in very few hands.

The potency of such images of art in the later eighties comes, in part, from the stark contrast they bear to those of the seventies—when the idea of a student going on to make a living as an artist in this country seemed like a fantasy.

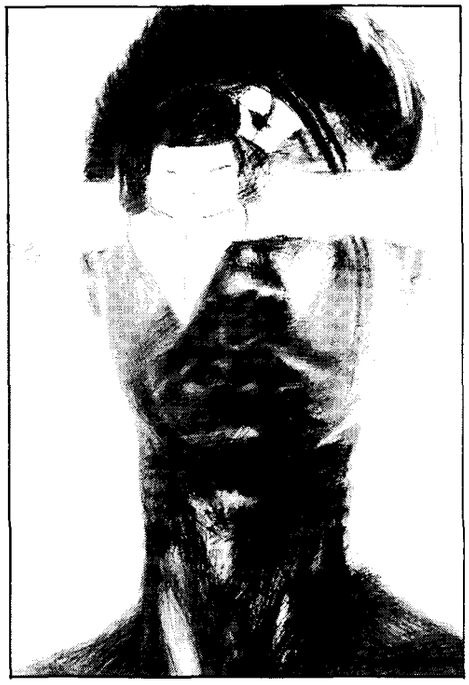
But the inference which has been drawn from the evidence of the current boom is wrong in several important respects. First, it relies for its effect (as did Wolfe) on the existence of another hypothetical picture: a picture of a pure and uncorrupted art whose true and essential nature was once accorded its proper respect by critics and collectors alike. They showed their respect by remaining a dutiful three steps behind the magisterial progress of art, and only moving in subservient response to that progress. It is solely in relation to an image of this sort that the current prominence of dealers, or of critics during the fifties, could be interpreted as so deeply improper, and as evidence of structural change in artistic production.

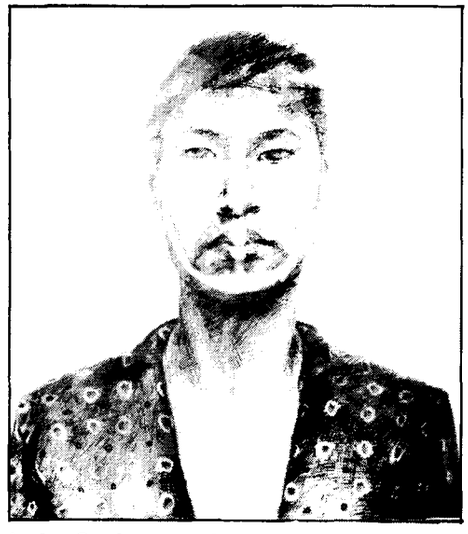
If, on the other hand, this mythic vision of art is dropped in favour of one which recognises the existence of a network of interest groups—artists, dealers, galleries, museums, collectors, journals and educators—then the current prominence of the market can be read more as a quantitive expansion of one element in that network than as a change in its basic structure. The most obvious effects of this expansion have been a rise in the price paid for art, a lot of speculative activity, and many more opportunities for young artists to exhibit and sell work. There is literally more space to display art.

The result is not that a different kind of work suddenly emerges from nowhere in response to this need, but that more and more underdeveloped work gets smartened up and presented as major art. A lot of student-level work is getting catapulted into large-scale exhibitions where it often just looks out of its depth.

The **British Art Show 1990**, which opened at the impressively refitted McLellan Galleries in Glasgow last week, illustrates this tendency, as did the revived *New Contemporaries*, which was held at the ICA last month. When the *British Art Show* was last held, in 1985, the selectors chose work by artists whose reputations were established. The present show, which will set the tone for many exhibitions to come this year, consists of work by 42 artists whose average age is well under 30, over half of whom had not exhibited before 1988. Many left college only a couple of years ago, over two thirds attended a London college, and over a third attended the same college —Goldsmiths.

The *British Art Show* makes no attempt to be a survey of any general kind. Rather, the selectors have chosen from a specific and restricted range of work made by a relatively small group of young people. They are justified in their selection, they claim, by the sheer depth, diversity and originality of the work produced by this group.





Lesley Sanderson makes political statements in pencil on paper at Glasgow's McLellan Galleries: (Top) "See Me" (1986) and "Fuck the British Movement" (1984)

Unfortunately the *British Art Show* is neither quite the wonderful blooming of undiscovered creative talent its organisers would have us believe, nor is it the empty symptom of a novelty-craving market its detractors would like to maintain. In fact its most noticeable feature is the similarity between much of the work on show and a great deal of college-made art of the past 15 years. The main difference is that it is often bigger and more expensively made.

The show consists of work made from a diverse range of media. The majority of work is sculpture of one kind or another, although there is a certain amount of painting and some photographic-based work. If there is a general division in types of work in the show it is between that which, in its materials and techniques, references authenticity, nature, and forms of social and psychological isolation, and that which is self-consciously unauthentic, and speaks of mass culture and commodities.

The main exception to this general division is that work which makes reference to specific issues in a wider political world, and uses art principally as a means to illustrate issues like the problems of colonialism as it affects blacks in England, or Catholics in Northern Ireland. Much of it uses photographic or film technology, in collage or documentary format.

Overall, the range of interests and problems are fairly familiar ones. There is nothing wrong with this in itself: it is quite normal and proper that students encounter these issues and work on them.

But something goes wrong when they are taken out of context and shoved into the marketplace. All of a sudden there is considerable pressure on the student or young artist to polish up the appearance of the stuff and in doing so to suppress the unresolved and potentially interesting aspects of the work.

A lot of the *British Art Show* has this look about it. It is one of the most noticeable effects of the contract which has developed between certain London colleges and a number of commercial galleries. (There are ironies in this relationship, not least of which is that while the former institutions become more impoverished and depleted through government cuts, the latter are multiplying and, in some cases, making money hand over fist.) To the galleries, the colleges represent a pond over-full of small fish only too eager to hurl themselves into the nearest net. To the colleges, a gallery with a line of former students to its name is the ultimate mark of success these days.

This is another point of contrast with a few years ago when the only viable exhibiting opportunity for many young artists was a range of Arts Council funded and other non-profit making galleries. Many of these no longer exist. Nor for that matter does much of the talk that was around at the same time—talk of the "avant garde" and of opposition to the mainstream and the marketable, talk of getting up people's noses and of sticking spanners in the works. But perhaps that was just talk.

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Cinema

Sun rises in the east

Japan is buying into Hollywood, says Suzanne Moore

Is it really fair to compare a film made in one of the poorest countries in the world with a $37 million production by one of Hollywood's flashiest directors? No of course not. But **Yaaba**, made in Burkina Faso, a country with no film-making infrastructure will have to compete with Ridley Scott's **Black Rain**. Such is the democracy of the marketplace.

In fact this week's releases seem deliberately chosen to highlight the inequities of "the system". First we have the big boys. Brian de Palma's *Casualties of War* is another hugely expensive guilt-tripping Vietnam movie. Then there is Scott's *Black Rain* set in Japan, *Yaaba* from Africa and *Piravi* from Kerala in India. *Yaaba* and *Piravi* will, no doubt, be lumped together as "Third Cinema" though actually Kerala has a thriving film culture unlike Burkina Faso.

Yaaba, directed by Idrissa Ouedraogo, with its clear images, its wide open spaces and faith in storytelling is a million miles away from the cluttered frames of Hollywood. *Yaaba* means grandmother and the plot concerns the relationship between an old woman and a young boy. But underneath the deceptive simplicity of the film we see a complex portrait of village existence. Though these people have nothing—no electricity, few possesions—Ouedraogo never simplifies their emotional life.

One wonders what Ridley Scott would have done in the brilliant light of this red desert landscape. Could he bear one frame of a film not to be stuffed with *things* and reflections of things? How could he even contemplate a movie without smokey light filtering though grey-blue venetian blinds? For Ridley is a former ad man, the designer director par excellence. This obsession with surface has produced some of the best and most influential movies of the last ten years. Both *Blade Runner* and *Alien* looked fantastic and had the added extra of exciting plots. *Black Rain* simply looks fantastic.

It is set largely is Osaka, which will no doubt interest those who are in the business of constructing the cyberpunk canon. *Blade Runner's* vision of a future American city was swarming with Asiatic influence and Chiba City, one of the locations of William Gibson's seminal novel *Neuromancer*, was also in Osaka. Yet Scott's explanation for choosing Osaka over Tokyo is based on practicalities—it was an easier place to film in. Here, in this empire of neon signs, the previous influences of his films can be foregrounded and you can't help feeling that, like so many of us, he is far happier dealing with Japan as *the future* rather than dealing with it in the present.

The plot itself is as old as they come. Two New York cops witness a murder and are assigned to take the killer back to the Japanese police in Osaka. It's another cop-out-of-water scenario with the culture clash played for all its worth. Michael Douglas plays the hard cop Nick, an unlikeable macho bore who watches his partner, the soft cop, get disembowelled by a gang of Japanese maniacs on motorbikes. They are all members of the Yakusa, "the Jap mob" which is crudely portrayed here as a more exotic version of the Mafia. After the death of his buddy, Nick reluctantly teams up with his Japanese counterpart, the cautious and honest Masahiro and ends up teaching him a thing or two about American philosophy summed up here as "sometimes you have to go for it".

As dubious and racist as this film is, full of lines like "Isn't there a nip in this building who speaks fucking English?" (which hasn't stopped it being acclaimed in Japan itself), it is undeniably first-class entertainment. It is slick, loud and full of thoroughly enjoyable, mindless violence. Every frame is crammed with surface and superficial detail, steam and light. Every puddle is spotlit, every pair of sunglasses dazzling.

Yet underneath all these shining surfaces there is an emptiness that is not just the emptiness of a formula plot but a sense of foreboding. America doesn't know how to deal with Japan. It cannot accept that it is no longer itself the centre of the world. And it cannot begin to accept that it has been beaten at its own game, rather than by some commie plot. Japan has made capitalism *work*.

American detectives Nick Conklin and Charlie Vincent are surrounded by bikers in "Black Rain"

The central relationship of *Black Rain*, between Nick and Masahiro, is a crumblimg assertion of American superiority. Nick cannot come to terms with the Japanese code—the stereotype of membership of a group being more important than individual desires. Nick sees Japan as a mere imitator, a country full of repression and with no originality. There is nothing more alien to the American ethos than the idea of a voluntary rather than an enforced collectivity. Nick's is the desperate voice of rugged individualism, a man who refuses "to play by the rules". Japan is full of rules that are incomprehensible to him. And then we have the Yakusa who are actually fighting over counterfeit money. It is almost an admission that Japan cannot only produce goods more efficently than the west, but that it can now make its own dollars. America is redundant which is why this movie makes such a conspicuous and botched effort to turn us back to the American way.

Outside the fiction of the film, Japan is actually buying into the fiction-making machine of Hollywood. Sony has recently taken over some of the major studios. As the sun rises in the east, the American debt crisis grows. The only female character in the film, naturally enough a glamourous American bargirl on the make, describes her relationship with the country as a love-hate one.

But *Black Rain* is full of very little love for Japan. It is fear that drives it, and the Japanese themselves are portrayed as the ultimate *Aliens*. Instead the film mouths its t-shirt slogan, "Sometimes you have to go for it", as jingoistic compensation for what even the American government is having to come to terms with: that sometimes it's too late. Someone else has already gone for it and is winning.

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Theatre

Cultural clichés

Theatre as peep show is over, says Rodney Barker

The proscenium arch fell long ago. Theatre is no longer something special on the other side *there* while we sit in different clothes in a different world *here*. Ever since Bradford's *West Side Story* in the huge sheds of Titus Salt's mill, the audience has started to become as mobile as the performers, following them round from one vast open set to the next. While for the rich, mobility might mean jetting out to *Aida* in the Valley of Kings, for the rest of us it means the brick floors of old factories.

Liz Lochhead, Gerry Mulgrew and the Communicado theatre company have exploited all of this in every possible direction with their morose two-fingered gesture at Burns Night, **Jock Tamson's Bairns** in the rambling depths of Glasgow's Tramway (showing until 24 Feb).

Once you cut free from the conventions of theatre as peep show, you can have carnival, dance, music and spectacle without boundaries. Lochhead herself is similarly eclectic, and as poet, playwright and stand up comic is able to collaborate on a script that nibbles around the edges of Scotland's cultural clichés. She does it with verbal glee, though I'm still not sure what "monoglutium sodomite" is.

National myths are usually either heroic or maternal. The male protagonist of *Jock Tamson's Bairns* scarcely says a word and is dead when the action starts. In hell he is the haggis at a ghoulish Burns Night supper, but when his stomach is cut open, all that comes out is yards of tartan, on which the would be feasters read off the gall stones of national anatomy: Kenneth McKellar, the Loch Ness monster, condensation.

The picture of the Scottish soul is pretty depressing. The phrase "we're all Jock Tamson's bairns" means much the same as "we're all God's children". But it's more earthly and implies fewer hopes or ambitions. At one grippingly effective moment, person after person reaches slowly, tentatively, outwards and upwards, to be just as surely eased back into prayerful reticence by other performers. We police each other's aspirations, and the commendation to a child well dressed is "smart, but not showy". A boy punished at school for something he didn't do evokes the comment, "He may not have deserved it today, but he'll deserve it tomorrow."

Having revived to his former state of drunken ineffectualness when he descends into hell, the man who stands for his people reacts rather than acts, and is distinguished by little more than bewilderment, treachery, and repression. The women take the initiative as often as not. But they are also the ones who again and again are betrayed, patronised, or deserted by men whose occupations are as transient as their loyalties. The play is full of leaving, and the memories of war and the high seas which entice the boy men again and again.

A theatre like the Tramway provides so many opportunities for dramatic surprise that any company will be tempted to use every last trick. You can have real drizzle falling on real bricks over a trash heap graveyard; you can open up double doors and bring in hearse and band from the street. You can lower hu platforms from the ceiling, and lead the au dience on a dance of death around the vaulted corridors.

It's all very well for Glasgow, you might think, but it would hardly work in the Lyceum, Hove. But it would, and does, work anywhere where there's an abandoned factory. These days there are quite a few of those. Conservative economic policy may have created unexpected opportunities for the popular arts.

Sean Hudson

"Jock Tamson's Bairns" when the drunk's stomach is cut open, yards of tartan come out

Magazines

Cash from chaos

Roger Sabin reports from France on comic lifelines

The Angoulême International Comics Festival, France's annual homage to the so-called "9th art", is not exactly the sort of event we associate with comics' conventions in Britain. Each year, a staggering 250,000 people migrate to the town in south west France, to check out the latest *bandes dessinées* (as comics are known) and meet the stars.

But Angoulême 90 is of special interest because this year, for the first time, Britain has been invited as the guest nation of honour. Everybody who is—or has been—anything in British comics is here, from veterans like Leo (*The Beano*) Baxendale and *The Guardian*'s Posy Simmonds to newer stars like Alan Moore (prize-winner at last year's Angoulême) and Dave McKean, illustrator of the latest *Batman* bestseller *Arkham Asylum*. To celebrate and promote the fact, the official festival logo features a cartoon punk rocker, safety-pins and all, waving a union jack.

Notwithstanding that punk's been dead and buried for at least ten years, the motif does resonate with a certain French attitude to British comics. For it soon becomes clear that British comics do have a reputation here for being fast-paced, anarchic and, above all, violent.

And walking around the immaculately set out British exhibition, thematically entitled "God save the comics!", you have to admit they've got a point. Re-evaluating one's own comics heritage through European eyes, the violence is indeed incredible—from the classroom chaos of *The Beano*'s Bash Street Kids through *2000AD*'s Judge Dredd zapping the "muties", to *Arkham Asylum*'s psychotic caped crusader mutilating himself with a piece of glass.

But the punk could also be construed as symbolising the French attitude to comics' production value in the UK. Despite the acknowledged excellence of some of the art work, the end product is traditionally seen as "cheap and nasty"—a poorly-produced throwaway commodity for a juvenile and uncritical audience.

Eurocomics, on the other hand, derive from a completely different tradition, and have long been regarded as an art form suitable for all

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ages. As such, the production values are considerably higher, and the comics on display here in the publishers' pools are generally expensive, hard-backed albums that are made to last.

The most worthwhile aspect of the festival in terms of British comics has been the interest aroused by the new range of graphic novels from the UK which are very much influenced by the European high production values. The fans love them: particularly popular this year are funnyman Hunt Emerson's *Lady Chatterley's Lover* and the David Lloyd/Alan Moore thriller *V For Vendetta* (which is nominated for two prizes). At last it's looking as if the traditional European snobbery is becoming passé.

And if the fans are keen, so are the publishers. Trade is the festival's other raison d'être, and this year there have been an encouraging number of rights deals being struck to bring more British comics into Europe. Now that the comics are more to European taste in terms of format, there is a rush to import more of the "British anarchic spirit". And that's better than good news in a country where sales of a single comic book become "respectable" at 50,000: a clear case of cash from chaos, as punks used to say.

The Angoulême festival took place last weekend

Music

Shock of the new

Mark Sinker meets fascism, Stalinism and October revolution

Events in Yugoslavia—the collapse of the Communist Party, the emergence of intolerant local nationalisms—may well put an end to the only east European pop cultural project that has ever been given non-condescending attention by the UK pop intelligentsia.

The rock group Laibach (above) first came to Britain from Ljubljana in 1984. They attracted immediate attention. Whereas elsewhere in the east rock existed as an uneasy sign of youth dissatisfaction, Laibach seemed to be manipulating pop with considerable camp resource, while dealing—apparently—with the real world (their favourite words were production, art, economy and ideology).

An arm of the art movement Neue Slowenische Kunst (which also included a painters' group Irwin, and a theatre group Red Pilot), they claimed to be unashamedly totalitarian in their ideology, speaking in the rhetoric of the October revolution, but dressing it in the grandiose statist garb of fascism and Stalinism combined.

Everything about them was a disgusting shock to their orthodox communist countrymen, who didn't know what to make of them. On the one hand, they seemed wholly uncritical of the concept of art-as-state-socialist-propaganda. On the other, they kept identifying it with Nazi memorabilia. In a country where Communist and fascist partisans had fought bitterly, which built its national identity on a wobbly non-alignment, this identification of two extremes must be a powerfully subversive art-gesture.

Out of context (out of Yugoslavia), NSK played up to this well, pushing all the right buttons for art-punk support. They combined elements of pagan folk art and socialist realism, proclaiming Slovenia the lost heart of European civilisation. Laibach went further, adding slabs of Wagner to slowed-down industrial Euro-disco; their singer wore antlers on-stage, and croaked through western pop covers (climaxing last year when they covered The Beatles' *Let It Be* in its entirety, transforming it into a ludicrous comic-Aryan epic).

In context, things were less clear. Was this really a sophisticated avant garde put-on, a group of young artists pushing the state's limited liberalism as far as it would go ? Or was it all a slimy after-the-fact justification of something more cynical ?

Speaking in the rhetoric of the October revolution, but dressing it in the grandiose statist garb of fascism and stalinism

It's been clear this past week that the regional communist parties are now playing—desperately—to local nationalisms. Was NSK just an early manifestation of that, a money-making exercise on the part of the Slovenian authorities, where a blind eye was turned to any subtexts in the calculation that these would go down well in the post-punk west ? Recall our record companies subsidising punk in its swastikas-for-shock phase.

While it's true that to outsiders the way NSK play with Slovenian iconography only makes it seem silly, that's actually true of all nationalisms, to outsiders. It may seem impossible that anyone could fall for anything so transparently parodic, but the force of totalitarianism as a pop cult event was the shared shouldering of non-believer contempt. This can be mocked—it's worth mocking and at a distance, it's provocatively amoral, and perhaps valuable—but it's a compromised irony, and in the end a risky undertaking.

Laibach could only play their double game as long as no genuine popular voice within Yugoslavia echoed their irresponsibility, as long as the state remained monolithic. Punk mutated into something its sponsors had no control over. As soon as a latent Slovenian contempt for the rest of Yugoslavia ("the wild south", as some members of NSK were heard to refer to it) moves towards political reality—however minor as yet—Laibach, if they're not going to end up a morbid outgrowth of an overlong transitional era neither free nor unfree, are going to have to grow up and move on.

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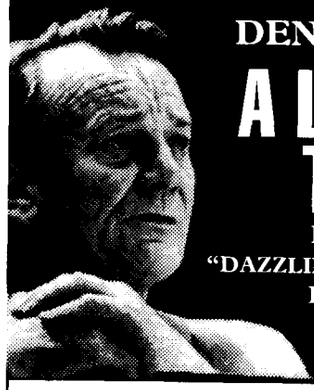

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ORGANISER(S) required to run one or more 11 day summer camps for underprivileged London children. You will need to be able to organise and motivate 20 volunteers, 75 children, 9 -14 yrs and small catering staff. 40 acre coastal site in Suffolk with good facilities. Option to work alongside one of our experienced organisers.

Full details including substantial remuneration from:
London Children's Camp. 33 Farren Road London SE23 2DZ.
Tel: 690 1114.

MOZAMBIQUE INFORMATION OFFICER

Assistant to Director in small but busy London office. Main responsibility office management and finances, and share in general information work. Salary £12,000 - £15,000, according to experience. Job sharers welcome.

Closing date applicaitions 24 February, interviews 10 March. Send large SAE for details to M.I.O., 7A Caledonian Road, London N1 9DX.

Master of policy studies

A two-year, part-time Master's course run jointly by the School for Advanced Urban Studies and the School of Applied Social Studies, designed for people with experience in policy making and implementation through public employment or voluntary and community activities.

Involves a core course in Policy Analysis; a special subject chosen from (in 1989) Health Policy, Housing Policy, Penal Policy, Personal Social Services Policy and Practise, or Urban Policy; and a Project.

Equal opportunities principles will govern recruitment.

For further details please write or ring quoting NSS 22

S·A·U·S

UNIVERSITY OF BRISTOL
SCHOOL FOR ADVANCED URBAN STUDIES
Rodney Lodge · Grange Road · Bristol · BS8 4EA
Tel · 0272 741117

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PROMOTING EMPLOYMENT FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES IN THE 1990's

We believe that employment is a realisable goal for people with disabilities. We are committed to take action to achieve this aim. So we are setting up an Employer Liaison and Marketing Team to work with Employers on Employment and Disability.

The Team will promote and facilitate the employment of people with disabilities by working closely with Employers.

This is a new Team and we want to take positive steps to remove the barriers to employment for people with disabilities.

If you want a challenge for the new decade here it is!

EMPLOYER CONSULTANT - DISABILITY (TEAM LEADER)

£15,396-£16,743

Job Ref No: D8/4

- Develop a market strategy
- Positively involve employers
- Co-ordinate the work of the team
- Portray positive images of people with disabilities

EMPLOYER CONSULTANTS - DISABILITY

£8,967-£12,462

Job Ref No: D8/5

- 2 jobs at the sharp end
- Signing up employers
- Building the database
- Making it work for people with disabilities

We are looking for people who have some previous marketing, campaigning or any similar experience in a developmental role. Previous working experience with employers; private or public sector or of working with community or consumer organisations will be relevant.

It is ESSENTIAL to have an understanding of the issues relating to Employment and Disability or an empathy with the needs of people with disabilities. Preferably we would like the jobs to be filled by people with disabilities though all applications are welcome.

Further information and application forms (returnable by 23 February 1990) from: Development Department, Personnel Unit, Baskerville House, Broad Street, Birmingham B1 2NA. Tel. 021 235 4800.

Information enquiries to Susan O'Shea 021 235 2792 or Jon Bloomfield 021 235 3570.

This is a joint initiative of the Economic Development Unit and Social Services Department backed by the Department of the Environment, Business in the Community and the Employers Forum on disability.

Birmingham City Council

The City Council welcomes applications from all sections of the community, irrespective of race, colour, gender, sexuality or disability.

Job Sharers welcome, no partners necessary

LAMBETH

SERVICES WELL WORTH DEFENDING

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH & CONSUMER SERVICES

Senior Information & Research Officer

£16,380-£17,532 pa inc.

This post plays a key role in ensuring that front line environmental health and consumer services respond to the needs of local people. We are introducing computers to monitor service usage performance and equal opportunity. The Senior Information and Research Officer will have major involvement in the development and implementation of new information systems. She/he will also be involved in identifying and analysing the service and policy implications of major new legislation and organising the Directorate's research and information service.

Previous experience in a local authority or other large organisation and a background which included research projects and report writing is necessary for the post.

The ability to analyse and interpret legislation and complex documents is essential as is knowledge of local authority and central government functions. You must have the ability to identify how the impact of poverty and discrimination on local people affect access to local authority services. You should have awareness of information technology applications and the ability to use a micro computer (with training).

You will be supervising three staff and must be able to take responsibility for preparing project proposals, devising and prioritising the team's work programme, and ensuring that deadlines are met. Ref: E10.*

Telephone 01-622 6655 ext 156 for an application form, or write to: The Personnel Section, Directorate of Environmental Health & Consumer Services, Ellen Kuzwayo House, 138-146 Clapham Park Road, London SW4 7DD.

Preferably telephone for an application form

Always quote the correct reference number

Completed application forms must be received by 16th February 1990 unless otherwise stated.

** POST SUITABLE FOR JOB SHARE*

As part of the Council's equal opportunity employment policy applications are invited from people regardless of race, creed, nationality, disability, age, sex, responsibility for children or dependents and from lesbians and gay men. Applications are particularly welcomed from people with disabilities as they are under-represented among the Council's staff.

Well worth working for.

ELTSA

END LOANS TO SOUTH AFRICA

Seeks a COORDINATOR for the Campaign against Financial Links with apartheid.

Salary: £10,000 per annum.

ELSTA Seeks to be an equal opportunities employer.

Details from Roshi Naidoo, ELTSA, 56 Camberwell Road, London, SE5 0EN. Tel: 01-708 4702.

Closing date: February 19th 1990.

NUCPS

nucps

RESEARCH OFFICER VACANCY AT NUCPS HQ

The National Union of Civil and Public Servants wishes to recruit a Research Officer who will work as part of a small team of Research Officers offering research support on trade union issues to Headquaters Officers and Union committees.

The postholder must be able to communicate effectively. An ability to draft clear and concise papers on complex issues is essential. Experience in Civil Service or Public Sector Trade Union work and/or relevant research experience would be desirable. The postholder would be required to work initially on equal opportunities issues.

The salary scale is: £13779, £14445, £15112, £15778, £16444 plus Inner London Weighting of £1750 pa.

Applications and CVs should be sent to the General Secretary, National Union of Civil and Public Servants, 124/130 Southwark Street, London, SE1 0TU, to arrive not later than Friday, 9th February, 1990.

Interviews for short-listed candidates will take place on 14th February, 1990.

Please give a daytime telephone number for contact purposes.

NUCPS is an equal opportunities employer.

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LINEAGE/HEARTSEARCH BOOKING FORM

If you're fed up with routine or boxed in by boredom then

BREAK OUT
for
Valentine's Day

Don't wait any longer for your knight or Valkyrie on a white charger – summon them with a message in

9 February NSS special Valentines Day

HEARTSEARCH

50p per word (minimum 20 words) incl. VAT.
Box Numbers £2.50 extra

Copy date: Friday. Prior to publication on the following Friday.

Please complete the coupon below and send with remittance or credit card number.

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Classified Department,
New Statesman & Society,
Freepost, London, E2 8BR

Booksellers

SCARCE BOOK SERVICE list wants 01-876 7254. Hammersmith Books, High Street. London SW13 9LR.

Publications

DUTCH INTERIORS, new poems by Sarah Lawson, only £1.95, from Mid Northumberland Arts Group, Town Hall, Ashington, Northumberland NE63 8RX.

For Sale

VALENTINES, BIRTHDAYS, special occasions, send special songs, scale of love and regrets. Cassettes only. Send £3 to PAV Sales. PO Box 701 London E17 8QQ.

1963 – 1988 NEW STATESMAN treasured collection. Offers please 0933 663521.

Holiday/Travel

SOUTHERN SPAIN self-contained apartment in old olive mill. 12 miles from coast. Beautiful and unspoilt. Tel: (0923) 857760.

NORTH BURGUNDY. Gracious Manor house or simple cottage. Both sleeps six. Tranquil estate. With two rivers, lovely gdns, ancient trees. 01 267 8800.

EASTER ART STUDY SPAIN 8 – 22 April. Comprehensive 'live-in' art program - beginners + advanced. Beautiful, unspoilt surroundings. Summer also booking. Tel UK: 0923 857760.

SUMMER JOBS DIRECTORIES. Abroad or Britain in W.H Smith etc. at £5.95 each or from Vac Work, 9 Park End St, Oxford.

USA SUMMER JOBS: ranches, resorts etc. Directory listing 50,000 jobs in W.H. Smith etc. or £8.95 from Vac Work, 9 Park End St, Oxford.

BRECON BEACONS/Black Mountains: Charming 1700s cottage, logfires, radiogram, views, rivers, birds, hill-walking, castles, riding, comfort. Telephone 0272-736794.

Therapy

PROFESSIONAL COUNSELLING and psychotherapy, Kingston and Hampton area. Further information from 01-546 0449.

PSYCHOTHERAPY GROUP - ongoing for one year beginning Jan. 9th, meeting Tuesday evenings in N.W. London. For information contact Christine Embelton 062882 8139 or Werner Prall 01-451 3607.

Personal

PRELUDE!
Not a Dating Agency but simply the best way to meet new friends or partners.
The smart choice for unattached men & women.
Brochure 01-700 1410.

Services

EXPERT LANDSCAPE GARDENER, experienced and imaginative (presently working in Ireland) seeks long-term employment on medium to large size English garden/estate. Tel: 07623 27161 and ask for Mr Michael Breen.

GENERAL BUILDERS AND DECORATORS, who do a nice clean job and let you know whats happening. Phone 01-761 4592.

Heartsearch

OLD FRIENDS

DOES LIFE BEGIN AT 40?

MARRIAGE, FRIENDSHIP or COMPANIONSHIP:
the introduction agency for the 40s, 50s, & 60s

Details from: Anne Brent,
18a Highbury New Park, N5 2DB
Telephone: 01-226 5432

BORN-AGAIN IN LEEDS, Buddhist Female; 5'10", slim, long dark hair, long legs, 47; would share samsara, long walks, green passions, organic chickpeas, cuddles and culture. No Thatcherities. Please reply to Box (03) 035.

NATURAL FRIENDS, Britain's premier friendship service for intelligent, creative, 'green' minded people. Free details from:- NATURAL FRIENDS (NS), 15, BENYON GARDENS, CULFORD, SUFFOLK, IP28 6EA. (028484) -315.

WHERE 'ART THOU special lady 40's – 50's, professional or otherwise. I'm male, 50's divorced, solvent, ex-teacher have own business, living in North East/ Humberside area. Please reply to Box (02) 015.

LIVELY, PROFESSIONAL UNATTACHED MALE (35). Interests include walking, cycling, theatre, travel etc. seeks non-smoking female (25 - 35) with similar tastes for sincere relationship. Cumbria/Lancs/N. Yorks areas preferred. Replies to Box (02) 016.

LECTURER, 39, FEMALE, seeks reflective, emotionally aware man, 35 - 50 for friendship and sharing. Hampshire, London area. Please write to Box (02) 007.

LADY WRITER recently seperated , late 40s, cultured and a bit bohemian seeks interesting man for open-ended relationship. Please write to Box (04) 036.

LONDON DESIRABLE ELEGANT PROPERTY built early fifties - (sic - black intelligent woman in education) invites tallish intellectual males 35-47 for early viewing - view long tenancy. Please reply to Box (04) 037.

EAST EUROPEAN WOMAN, writer/lecturer, attractive, seeks extrovert tall companion (38-45) ready to explore new emotional and political horizons. Write to Box (04) 038.

INDEPENDENT WOMAN, early 40's, loves life, job, children (shared care with their father). Hasn't allowed time lately for laughter/ languishing, talking/walking, wining/dining - now looking for man/woman to share these essentials. North West England. Do write - why not? Please reply to Box (04) 039.

LONDON TEACHER, 48, cynical but idealistic, loves jazz, friends and adventure. Armchair health freak thwarted by love of life. Seeks fun, intelligent man 30s - 50s. Write to Box (04) 040.

RETIRING OXFORD ACADEMIC seeks enduring friendship with mature lady, educated, confidential, sharing interests in books, music etc. Please reply to Box (04) 041.

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VOLUNTEER NOTICE BOARD is a free service provided by New Statesman & Society with financial assistance from Thames Television's Help programme. Interested organisations are invited to send their copy (approximately 45 words) to Dawn King at New Statesman & Society, Foundation House, Perseverance Works, 38 Kingsland Road, London, E2 8DQ by Friday preceding publication date. Please note this service is for recruiting volunteers only. If you have salaried vacancies contact the Classified Department on 01-739-1645.

FEMALE COMEDY WRITER with M.E. needs female live-in volunteer general assistant/ driver. Age 18 - 30. No special skills or experience required but competent driving, energy, and flexibility important. Interest in sport and/or outdoor pursuits an advantage. Accommodation plus £39 per week. Minimum 2 months commitment. Start end of Feb. Contact Ann Fletcher, Buckden Towers, Buckden, Huntingdon, Cambs. PE18 9TH. Tel: (0480) 62990/811146.

EDINBURGH CYRENIANS require f/time residential volunteers aged 18 - 30, for our farm & city communities offering long-term care and support for homeless young people. Min. 6 months committment required. Please contact Rosemarie at 20, Broughton Place, Edinburgh or on 031 556 4971.

AFRICAN STUDIES - volunteers wanted for interesting work to do with all aspects of Africa and its problems at the Institute below. We need computer people plus editors, typists and any other helpers, including publicity. The Institute does research publishing etc. Contact Ben Turok. Institute for African Alternatives at 23 Bevenden St, London N1 6BH, telephone 01 251 1503.

COME ALONG for an hour (or two) and join with SHELTER volunteers on our City of London Street Collection Day - Friday, 16th Februrary 1990. We urgently require collectors to cover the one square mile and help us raise vital funds. We urgently require collectors to cover the one square mile and help us raise vital funds. Find out how you can take part by contacting: Marie Healy, Shelter, 88 Old St, London EC1V 9HU. Tel: 01-253 0202 Ext 226.

UK VOLUNTEERS WEEK 1990 is taking place 1-7 June. Organisations whose work depends on volunteers can celebrate with their volunteers, run special events to encourage volunteers, publicise the work of volunteers in the media, recruit new volunteers in the week, take to the great outdoors with their volunteers. For more information write to Sheila Edwin at The Volunteer Centre UK., 29 Lower Kings Rd, Berkhamsted, Herts HP4 2AB.

CHARTER 88 VIGILS. Make a date with democracy. Are you interested in helping to organise the Charter 88 monthly vigils? All skills and enthusiasm welcome. Ring Josephine King or Paul Farthing on 833 5813 (answering machine after office hours).

WORKING WITH THE YOUNG to help the old - Help the Aged in N. London needs volunteers to help with their schools education and fundraising program for 1990. Work at home doing administrative tasks, or if you have a car, help the appeals organiser in schools. Contact Andy Binns on 01 861 0120 b/w 9 - 5 Mon-Fri. (Expenses covered).

ARTICLE 19 is an international human rights organisation campaigning against censorship. We need a volunteer to help in our busy office one or two days a week - travelling expenses and lunch allowance paid. If you can help, please ring Ann Naughton on (01) 403 4822 or write for details to Article 19, 90 Borough High St., London SE1 1LL.

THAMES HELP

Thames Help, presented by Jackie Spreckley, is a four minute local social action programme. It appears three times a week on Thames Television at 6.50pm approximately (check TV Times for details). Here is a summary of this week's programmes.

This week we are in Telethon mood.

Tuesday 6th February – British Refugee Council

The last Thames/LWT Telethon raised £3.6M in the London area. Hundreds of groups working with old people, children, community and arts groups benefitted. The British Refugee Council received a small grant from Telethon which it used to help equip their Open Learning Resource Centre. Irene Masaba is one of the hundreds of people who have learned valuable skills there.

Phone after the programme on 01-388 8282 for information on how to apply, or write to:

Steve Billington/Amanda Clow,
London Weekend Television,
Kent House,
South Bank,
London, SE1. Tel: 01-737 8622.

Wednesday 7th February – London Youth Adventure

London Youth Adventure is a new organisation, entirely funded by Telethon, which will be giving grants to young people aged between 13 and 21 who want to get into a new activity. The activity can be sporty, academic or artistic. After the programme we will be sending out some information on how to apply and the phone number to ring is 01-388 8282, or write to:

Paul Wilson, London Youth Adventure,
c/o Thames Help Programme, Thames Television, 149 Tottenham Court Road, London W1P 9LL.
Tel: 01-387 9494 Ex. 5297.

Thursday 8th February – Community Fundraising

As each Telethon approaches groups from all over the country come together to think of new and wacky ways to raise money for it. The millions of pounds raised by Telethon would not be collected were it not for thousands of well meaning individuals. We look at a few of their past fund-raising exploits and suggest a few new fun ways to raise money. Ring in after the programme on 01-388 8282 for a registration form or write to Steve Billington/Amanda Clow (as above).

THAMES TELEVISION

Thames Help, Thames Television PLC, 149 Tottenham Court Road, London W1P 9LL. Telephone: 01-387 9494.

MIND in CAMDEN needs volunteers in all areas:- ethnic minorities group/ day-centre/ drop-ins/ shop/ housing/ tranx group. Day, evening or weekend work available. Expenses paid + support and experience of a busy mental health organisation. More information from Anne 485 3021.

FRIENDLY rural community in Devon would like one or two volunteers to help work on a number of mainly construction projects with environmental and alternative living emphasis. Cheerfulness and adaptability more important than skills. Tel. (036 37) 228/580 and ask for Les.

VICTIMS HELPLINE requires volunteers for its telephone counselling service. Training and expenses provided. Anyone who speaks a minority ethnic language particularly welcome. If you are interested please contact Victims Helpline, St. Leonards, Nuttall Street, London. N1 5LZ., 01-729 1226 by 23rd February.

WESTMINSTER PENSIONERS Link: We need you to help us to carry out practical tasks and/or visiting in the Westminster area. We are involved in anything from window cleaning, gardening, to taking someone out for a walk, or a visit to the shops. Any time to spare? Please contact us; Anita, Otto or Sarah, on 289 1849.

CAMDEN Tranquilliser Services requires volunteers who have had a bad tranx experience themselves, recovered from it and are willing to help others. Group work, help-line, home visits, etc. Long-stay volunteers qualify for sessional payments. Contact:- Ruby Tovet, afternoons, Mon. to Thurs. or leave message on ansaphone. Telephone 722 0832. 78, Adelaide Rd., NW3 3PX.

SMILE (Support the Mentally Ill & gain Life Experience) is part of Hampstead Community Mental Health Services. We need caring volunteers in the Hampstead/ Camden area to work with patients being discharged from hospital. Training & on-going support is provided. Travel expenses paid. Hrs by arrangement. For further information contact Helene Robinson on 431 0606.

EDINBURGH Sitter Service needs volunteers to give carers a break. We arrange a few hours respite on a regular basis for single parents and carers of frail elderly and disabled people. Volunteers receive preparation and support. Expenses paid. Contact us on : 031-557-3121.

A WOMEN'S ORGANISATION seeks volunteers to help with fund-raising, newsletters and mailings to members, maintaining an archive of press cuttings etc. Women Against Sexual Harassment is a voluntary organisation based in Central London which advises & supports women who are experiencing sexual harassment at work. Contact Valerie Mainstone 01 833 0222.

ANTI-APARTHEID Movement, campaigning for freedom in South Africa, needs volunteers in its national office to help with clerical work and fundraising projects. If you want to help, please call Lucy on 01-387 7966 for more information.

UNPAID VOLUNTEERS needed to form radical fringe political party based in NW, with accent on pushing Britain into a fully integrated Europe, with Green issues in mind. Must be intelligent, posess great resolve and be passionatly interested in politics, without being fanatical and dogmatic. Drive, flexibility and genuine commitment essential, as is forward thinking, unblinkered view. Specialist skills such as fundraising, lobbying, foreign contacts, media, debate, public speaking, particularly welcome. Please write: Eurogreen Party, 204 Wensley Road, Blackburn, Lancashire, BB2 6SS for application form, enclosing sae: by Friday 23rd February 1990.

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ENDGAMES

WEEKEND COMPETITION

No 3110 Set by Russell Lucas
A short story that includes violence, sex, religion, sadness, laughter, birth, death, animals, children, horror, nationalism, greed, compassion, clairvoyance and a political statement.

Report by Ms de Meaner
Another bumper crop which included a lot of unknown names. One newcomer wrote that this comp had stirred him out of his "usual torpor". Of course, I can't comment on his *usual* torpor but such of it that was on display was more than enough for me. Kevin Irving (where's my fiver?) sent in an advertisement for the Bible: "The Bible! It's got it all! Violence, sex, religion, sadness, laughter...etc." Ha bloody ha! I hate to lambast the same unfortunate two weeks running, but what the hell! We're not one of those inferior competitions found in lesser magazines where "short story" can mean what you like. Here, short story means short story. A pat on the back for Attila Hoare and John Hindle. Congratulations to Bill Greenwell for his 600th consecutive entry. And a tenner to the winners (none of the above).

Samantha Nerdlington opened the front of her doll's house for the thousandth time, and for the thousandth time surveyed the scene that met her irritated gaze: in the kitchen the footman was beating the bootblack; in the pantry the curate was attempting liberties with a serving maid all the while sermonising on charity; in the main bedroom the mistress of the house was giving birth to a baby, and the midwife was seeking to comfort the grief-stricken master of the house who wept copious tears—he knew not whether they were for his dying wife or himself; in the nursery fifteen infants played with their pet dogs regardlessly, while in a secluded corner one little boy was torturing his pet spaniel with a cut-throat razor (on the wall above his head were the words "England is a Lovesome Place, God Wot"); in the dining room the master's brother was starting on his fourth pint of sherry, while in the scullery a gullible scullery maid was spending all her savings on having her fortune told by an itinerant gypsy.

Samantha, overcome with a sudden fit of impatience, slammed the front of it shut and turned the entire structure upside down and gave it a good shake-up, making the figures within rattle and bang like anything. "There!" she laughed gaily, "the revolution starts here!"

Jim Yorke

Mary was in Berlin when they knocked holes in the Wall, and she celebrated by gang-banging some equally joyful East Germans who had crowded through to shop in the *Kurfurstendann*. On learning she was pregnant, her mother warned, "Abort it. No good will come. Its father was the thirteenth man to cross."

Mary was scornful. "How could you know? How could anyone?"

She felt confirmed in her optimism by an unproblematic delivery. "Thank you, God, you've answered my prayers," whispered Mary, clutching the warm, wool-wrapped bundle.

"Don't thank me yet," giggled the obstetrician. "Wait till you see what you got."

His laugh became a cackle, like a radiation leak alarm. Mary reached for her handbag, drew a pistol and punctured his face accurately between the eyes. But the cackle continued. Only then did she look at her child. At *it*.

It spoke its first words at two months: *Deutschland Erwache!* It never spoke any others. She raised the monster in sorrow and pity, trying to love it even when it ate live puppies, twelve at a go. But her faith waned: she came to believe that a united Germany would always pose a threat to the political stability of Europe.

Basil Ransome-Davies

"I always say British apples are the best," he said. "You've eaten seven already," she remonstrated. With juicy fingers, he slowly pulled her knickers down. Dangling among her sweaty pubic hairs was a silver crucifix. "It's coming!" she groaned, and from between her thighs there emerged a full-grown, one-eyed, hairless gorilla. With a furious snarl the gorilla brought its fist down on the man's skull, killing him instantly. "I dreamt last night that this would happen," sobbed the woman. "And he was only 57." Suddenly, her tears turned into hysterical, maniacal laughter.

"That," said the television announcer, "was a Party Political Broadcast on behalf of the Monster Raving Loony Party."

Susan, aged three, got up and switched off the set.

George Cowley

Lydia laughed bitterly as she lay back in Roderick's lean arms. There was still sweat on her from their passionate coupling, unaffected by her pregnancy.

"I suppose there can be no freedom for children born without privilege." She spoke with compassion, her hand lying on the livid bruise on Roderick's bare flesh, crushed so recently underfoot by a police horse.

"It makes me want to cry too, Lydia."

"Sometimes, in my despair I pray to God for help."

"But Lydia, I can foresee a time when things will change."

He looked at Lydia's swollen belly, "Our child will be born to a new world, when Ireland will be free of English oppression." Roderick's eyes were filled with a fervid conviction. "This is why we must go ahead with our plan, Lydia."

Lydia and Roderick embraced again. Tomorrow would be serious. In the early light they headed, prepared, to London. At Downing Street they showed their stolen press passes and passed the opulent gates. The Prime Minister, awaiting the press, looked down towards those gates. "If only they could have been bigger, been GOLD," she thought. Then her eyes opened wide with horror at the two people unloading mortars and grenades, taking aim.

Moments later, surrounded by carnage, Lydia yelped joyfully—her first contraction strongly felt. "Roderick," she cried. "It's true! Everything is changing."

Impassive, a small black cat viewed the scene from a high wall.

Adrian Weston

GRAFFITI BY PAIGE

No 3113 Set by Russell Lucas
Rewrite any children's classic in the muscled vernacular of the *Sun*. Not more than 250 words and in by 15 February.

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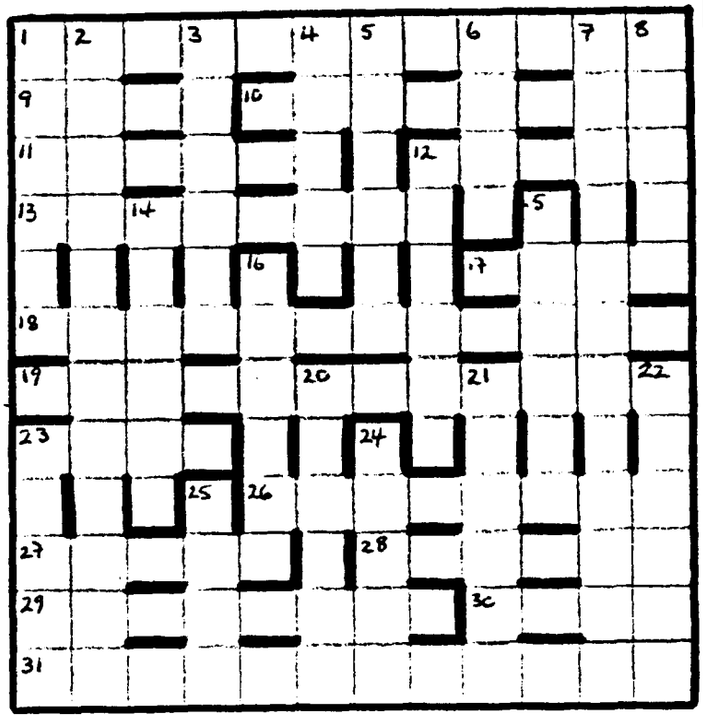
SALAMANCA

COLLINS THESAURUS

PRIZES: Copies of the *Collins Thesaurus in A-Z form* for the first three correct solutions opened. Entries to Salamanca, New Statesman & Society, Foundation House, Perseverance Works, 38 Kingsland Road, London E2 8DQ by first post 28th February

SALAMANCA: 157 "The Daily Blarg"

Each story heading is a normal clue to a normal answer. The story-lines following each contain the relevant number of definition/hints and a combined jumble of all the answers mixed together, beginning at the first or last letter of a word in the story. Clues and jumble appear in any order.



ACROSS

1 (12) GOVERNMENT TO CONTROL BT SHARE DISTRIBUTION WHEN TIME'S RIGHT

9(4), 10(8), 11(6) A supporter of the policy currently running in Stratford said yesterday, "We have to make each Telecom share a level pound, or we will find we are in a dreadful spot!"

12(5) LITTLE ANNA IS LEFT ON THE WAY TO THE ALTAR

13(8), 17(4),18(12) Family and friends said, "We condone and applaud the action of the groom," who, moments after he took his bride's palm, ran out. "It seems absurd," Anna confesses, "but I told him I eat sparingly to a strict code, and I do tend to sleepwalk rather a lot."

9(12) WE'LL PUT YOU IN OFFICE IN A MONTH, SAY HATLESS UNIVERSITY BOARD MEMBERS

23(4), 26(8), 27(5) It's not hard to be a Master, directors admit. So desperate are they for staff, entrance exam standards are being lowered. Recently a baggage carrier got in by the skin of his teeth.

28(6) MAN WITH MONASTIC LIFESTYLE "DIED" TWICE!

29(8), 30(4), 31(12) Brothers used a synthetic rubber base in the princely so-called race to save their priest once sickness claimed his life. One of the ears moved briefly before they finally gave up.

DOWN

1(6) PLAIN MOTHER, 16, TURNS UP TO WED FATHER, 19

2(12), 3(6), 4(5) Young mother of three, with rather too much liking for uniforms had to drive very fast to catch a departing ship in order to marry a US naval officer, father of two. The eventual fate of this seven depends on foreign sentimentality

5(3,3) SNAG GETS THE GIRL INTO THE BATH!

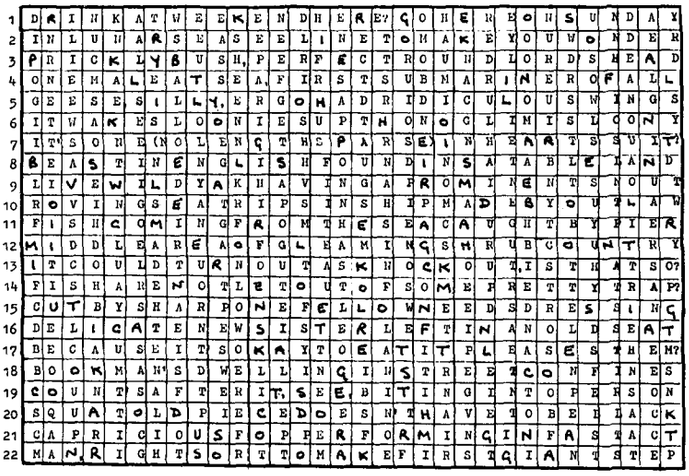
6(4), 7(12),8(5),12(6) Literally elegant page 3 girl, Patti, has landed a big film part, but unable to put up with the nude scene which comes after quite realistic battles etc, all her remaining appearances are made sitting neck-deep in suds!

14(6) OLD GERMAN DANCER GETS ADMITTED

15(6), 16(6), 20(6), 21(6) Although not a believer nor one to practice specific religious ceremonies (except in the Cafe-a-gogo!) Ursula Bahia De Groot, international ballet star, was let in to see the tombs and dome of relics in Sri Lanka yesterday

22(6) WORDS ARE NOT ENOUGH TO HURRY CHILD

23(5), 24(5), 25(4) Pete, the slowest boy of all time, is not a stupid moron, a psychiatrist explains. His weight is normal, his hearing is not impaired in any way—he's just one of those mischievous chidlren



Solution to 155:

Kiplings were courageous captains: Kirk; Marvel; Holly; Nemo; Rogers; Moonlight; Singleton; Kangeroo; Beaky; Pirate; Haddock; America; Hook; Kettle; Flint; Sensible; Cooks; Scott; Blood; Rook; Fantastic; Armstrong

Prizewinners: M Earle, St Leonards-on-Sea; Mr & Mrs Rich, Ripon; G D Tallis, Oxford

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